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THE NEW
STATESMAN
AND NATION
The Week-end Review

Vol. XXXI. No. 792. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1946 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Mr. Drew Pearson has never refrained from printing confidential papers out of any respect for the feelings of the British Government. In this case his quotation from the private instructions sent by Whitehall to Sir Alexander Cadogan has at least the advantage of allowing the general public to understand the nature of the Security Council's proceedings. The Foreign Office treats the Spanish question as a red herring trailed by the U.S.S.R., in order to divert public attention from the issue of Persia. If this was indeed the motive, the manoeuvre has had some success with the American public, which has never loved Franco; but it has not, of course, prevented the Security Council from insisting that the Persian question remains on the agenda. Whereupon Mr. Gromyko declares that Russia will take no further part in any discussion of Persia and the other Powers seek a way of shelving the Spanish problem. Thus all the real issues are evaded by everyone and, if no one, except Franco, is quite happy, all parties go their own way and no subject is dealt with on its merits.

After the Moscow Conference last December, Mr. Byrnes was much criticised for "appeasing" the Soviet Union; one result is that the United States now adopts a far tougher attitude towards every Soviet proposal. Yet the issues that are to arise at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers in Paris are urgent and have been far too long postponed. No peace settlement had yet been made, and the prospects for the coming Talks in Paris are not good. The Dominion Premiers are now discussing in Downing Street the future defence and trade of the British Empire, and Mr. Bevin has sought assurances of Dominion solidarity for the stand he intends to adopt in Paris. In spite of the decision to the contrary, which was the breaking-point at last September's conference, France will request to be allowed to take part in the Balkan Treaties, and she is likely to be backed by Britain and the United States. Presumably Russia will maintain her opposition. The U.S.S.R. is pressing for trusteeship in Tripolitania, and can support her claim by pointing to Britain's numerous trusteeships and to the unilateral occupation by the United States of large areas of the Pacific. But it is certain that the other Great Powers will oppose Russia's entry into the Mediterranean; Britain and the United States regard Italy and North Africa as a vital area of security against Russian expansion. Though the Russians have never yet formally supported the Yugoslav demand for Trieste, the trend of Moscow propaganda suggests that they will oppose any other solution.

The other territorial problems of South-East Europe are perhaps less difficult. There is likely to be little opposition to Transylvania being returned to Rumania, and it is probable that the Powers will agree to Italy retaining the Austrian Tyrol. On grounds both of justice and of ethnography such a decision would be regrettable, and in a world less mad than this it should not be difficult to find a way of sharing the hydro-electric power in the Tyrol on which Italy relies. This does not end the list of disputes involved in the Italian Treaty. Britain, America and Russia are likely to clash over the Dodecanese, and while the South Africans are furiously opposed to allowing Italy to regain any of her colonies, the French are on this point pro-Italian. As we consider these tangled and discordant issues, we doubt whether the vital problem of Western Germany and the future of the Rhine and the Saar, which are all on the agenda, will ever come up for discussion.

So urgent is the need of agreement that the Powers may still find a way out. If they do not, the Powers must individually decide whether to make separate peace treaties or to allow the present confusion to remain and the issues to sort themselves out. We understand that both courses are being canvassed in Washington. At the root of the whole conflict lies an ideological clash. The Soviet Union believes in the extension of Socialist planning over an ever-widening area, and is therefore opposed to capitalist entry into the Balkans. The United States stands for free access for capital and free markets open to the most powerful bidder. Mr. Bevin, as he has often told us, would like to develop the Danube and other waterways on an international basis. It would still seem to us the right policy for Britain categorically to reject the American thesis and to put forward a practical proposal by which Russia could share in a non-profit-making scheme for the international development of Western Germany, while the Western Powers would have a similar share in a T.V.A. scheme for the Danube. Otherwise the prospect for the world is a continued struggle for power in which the food, security and happiness of the common man is tragically forgotten.

The Darkening Shadow

With the food situation daily approaching more nearly to famine conditions in India and in the whole of Unrra territory, it still remains doubtful whether relief efforts will be sufficiently timely or efficacious. On the strength of a pledge secured from Washington that there will be assured replenishment by autumn, the British Government has undertaken to divert 200,000 tons of bread grains from the British "pipeline"—one third to Germany, one third to Unrra, and one third to India. The Canadian Government in its turn is making intense efforts to augment Canada's wheat exports during the next three months; and the situation in Poland is being relieved to a considerable extent by grain supplies furnished by the Soviet Union. The key to the whole question, however, remains in the United States. Fortified by Mr. Hoover's reports on the urgent needs of the claimant countries and spurred by Mr. La Guardia's vehement championing of Unrra's requirements, President Truman has taken two important steps: allocations of grain to U.S. millers are to be cut by 25 per cent. and a substantial bonus is to be paid to farmers for every bushel of grain released from farm stocks for export. Coupled with exhortations to the American public to cut down their consumption of bread, these measures may enable the U.S. Government to fulfil its promise of monthly exports of one million tons of grain during the next three months. Unhappily, all the action so far taken is belated, and in the case of India in particular, there is grave reason to fear that the shipments of grain will not arrive in time.

The French Constitution

With a majority of sixty, the Socialists and Communists together succeeded in passing the draft of the new French Constitution through the Assembly against the opposition of the Radical Socialists and the M.R.P. The draft will now be presented to the country in a referendum, to be held on May 5th, which will be the subject of a separate campaign from the June elections. Although the Cabinet itself has not been broken up—and may actually hold together until June, as it was always agreed that the constitutional issue should not involve the executive—the Communists have been successful in driving the Socialists and the M.R.P. apart. The Socialists, no doubt, will again reject the Communists' proposal for electoral collaboration and will insist upon fighting the elections on their own; but, even in the absence of an electoral alliance with the Communists, they must at last abandon their attempt to keep the balance between Left and Right. The M.R.P. leaders were probably unwilling to leave the Cabinet on the eve of the Paris Conference—a course which would have meant the last-minute replacement of M. Bidault by either a Socialist or a Communist. But the present crisis almost certainly has put an end to whatever chances there were of a further period of three party coalition after the elections. The Left must now strive for the adoption of the Constitution and for a workable majority in the New Assembly. The Constitution itself, after a hurried final revision by the Assembly, contains little of what the M.R.P. wanted. Apart from the reduction of the President to nothing but a ceremonial figure, it introduces the power of dissolution of the Assembly. A two-thirds majority will now be able to dissolve the Assembly at any time: after the first two and a half years of its five-year mandate, two votes of censure in any session will provide the Cabinet with the right to dissolve. Neither the "Council of the French Union" nor the Economic Council are to be regarded as part of the legislature. In domestic affairs the Left has won the first round of the struggle for power. For the Socialists, the price of victory in the second stage may be enforced membership of a predominantly Communist Cabinet.

Finland's Political Development

The succession of the former Conservative Prime Minister, Juho Paasikivi, to the Finnish presidency precipitated a political crisis in Finland. After two weeks of negotiation—in which neither of the two largest parties, Farmers and Social-Democrats, were able to form a government—Mauno Pekkala, leader of the new United Socialist Party, succeeded in creating a new Coalition. At present, the U.S.P. has only six members, all of whom broke away from the Social-Democratic majority which still supported Vaino Tanner, now serving a prison sentence for collaboration with the Nazis. But a substantial Opposition group remains in the Social-Democratic Party; its views do not differ essentially from those of the U.S.P. It was anticipated that this Left minority would try to capture the leadership of the Social-Democratic machine at the party conference due this month. The conference, however, has now been postponed until June, when it is hoped that the Peace Treaty with Britain and the Soviet Union will have been signed. The U.S.P. and the Communists have a working alliance and together hold the same number of Diet seats as the Social-Democrats. In the new Cabinet, the Communists and the U.S.P. each hold three seats, whilst the Social-Democrats have five, in a total of eighteen, five other portfolios being held by the Farmers' Party. The programme of the new Coalition includes a faster schedule for socialisation, closer relations with the U.S.S.R. and the democracies of the West, and a more thorough purge of "chauvinistic and undemocratic" elements. Although the new administration temporarily overcomes the crisis, it cannot settle the split in the Social-Democratic Party. The Left is undoubtedly consolidating its position in the country, but while the recent municipal elections showed Left gains at the expense of the Farmers' Party and the Right, the Left-wing Social-Democrats, both inside and outside the Party, gained from the Communists and from the Right wing of the Party. The main problem at the moment is whether the Left elements can succeed in winning control of the Party, or whether they will break with the group supporting Tanner and merge with the U.S.P. to form a new genuinely Socialist Party. Tanner, incidentally, is to receive 60 per cent. of his salary from the Helsinki Co-operative Society while in prison, and it was only at the last minute that the faction supporting him was persuaded to allow its members to participate in the new Coalition.

Steel and the State

Although the Opposition feigned surprise at the announcement of the Government's intention to impose "a large measure of public ownership" on the steel industry, the decision is well within the terms of the Government's mandate. The inclusion of the steel industry in the list set forth in the Labour Party's election manifesto of those ripe for nationalisation was well merited on every ground. Steel is a key industry which is in the hand of a powerful monopoly and has been the centre of international cartel arrangements. It is closely bound up with armaments, and is indeed the core of the armaments ring. It has used its monopoly to charge high prices which have seriously handicapped many British steel-using trades, including the motor car industry. It is a key industry from the standpoint of investment, since it needs large-scale expenditure on reorganisation and is pivotal in the supply of a wide range of capital goods. The vehemence of the Opposition's hostile reception of the announcement reflects recognition of the extent to which nationalisation of the steel industry will cut into the roots of the power exercised by the capitalist class. As for the methods by which the principle of public ownership is to be applied, the Government may be forgiven if they ask for time to consider the exact scope of nationalisation. The making of crude steel is closely integrated at many points with finishing processes; and it does not follow, merely because this close connection exists, that this or that section of, say, heavy engineering, should at this stage be taken over by the State. Provided its personnel is wisely chosen, the new Control Board which is to replace the existing Iron and Steel Control, should be an effective planning agent for the Government. Its task will presumably be to report, as expeditiously as possible, what processes and plants are inseparably connected with the production of crude steel. The main thing is that the Government has now rightly decided that, in an industry which requires drastic reorganisation and re-equipment, control without ownership would be ineffective.

Affiliations

Meeting for the first Easter Conference since the General Election, a number of trade union and political organisations had to decide upon their future relations with other parts of the Labour Movement. Both the Shop Assistants and the Clerical and Administrative Workers refused to support Communist affiliation to the Labour Party—in the latter case after several close votes. The I.L.P., however, meeting at Southport, instructed its leaders to make no further approaches to the Labour Party for affiliation but, pathetically, to build up the I.L.P. as an alternative to Labour. On the other hand, Common Wealth, deserted by its solitary M.P. at what looked like its last Conference, decided to approach the I.L.P. with a view to common action for agreed aims. The Co-operative Party, at Brighton, endorsed the suggested agreement between the Labour Party and the Co-operative Union which is to provide "all the advantages of affiliation without complete absorption.’ Each group will retain its identity and its annual conference will be the final arbiter of policy. But national joint policy and organisational committees are to be set up to co-ordinate the work of the two sections. This solution saves the Labour Party the embarrassment of accepting a new affiliate at a moment when it is strongly insisting that it is no longer a federal party and that no more applications for affiliation from separate parties can be entertained. Thus Transport House has opened the wicket gate for the Co-op. Party while keeping the portcullis down against the Communists. Apart from its belief that a decisive vote can be marshalled against Communist affiliation this Whitsun, the Labour Party now intends hurriedly to amend its constitution forever to exclude the Communists even from making application. The spectre of an enormous increase in the voting power of some unions after the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act haunts Smith Square.

After the R.A.F. Strikes

During the R.A.F. strikes in India at the beginning of the year, a clear promise of non-victimisation was given to the men by their commanding officers. It now appears that highly questionable methods are being used by the Special Intelligence Branch to extract confessions and evidence to justify court-martial action against the men's leaders, more than thirty of whom are now under arrest. Some time after the incidents were settled, the S.I.B. began interrogating large numbers of men, using the harsh sentence of ten years passed on Aircraftman Cymbalist for his part in the Singapore strike as means of persuading the men that it was better to give evidence in the hope of avoiding similar punishment. The S.I.B. have also threatened men with postponement of demobilisation, saying that unless they talked it would be a long time before they saw their families again. This has produced an atmosphere of intimidation in more than one camp and, not surprisingly, a number of men have chosen to give evidence against those they once elected to lead them. Similar information to that which has just reached us prompted several M.P.s to raise this matter in the House last week. Although Mr. Strachey managed to evade the question of victimisation, saying that the cases were *sub judice*, he twice conceded that special instructions had been sent to the investigators calling their attention to the provisions of Air Force Law against trying to trap men into incriminating themselves. Mr. Strachey should remember that there is sometimes a difference between the policy he transmits to India and the spirit in which it is applied. The authorities may feel that, now the unrest is over, they can run the risk of dealing with the ringleaders; but it would be both dishonest and unwise to go back on the promise made to men who explicitly stated their loyalty to the Labour Government.

A Great Ambassador

It is seldom indeed that the complimentary speeches made to a departing functionary are wholly sincere. In this sense the after-dinner tributes paid to John Winant, and broadcast on Tuesday night, are probably unique. Neither Mr. Bevin, Mr. Eden nor Sir Walter Citrine had to use a single diplomatic periphrasis to express their tokens of esteem and affection. John Winant is unique among Ambassadors; he came here to do a job of work; he shared the dangers and the rations of the British when things were at their worst. He is, if you like, a simple American who believes, as he says, that liberty will always be saved because men are fundamentally good. An unusual faith in the twentieth century, but one that kept Mr. Winant working as perhaps no Ambassador has ever worked before, contemptuous of all social frills and concentrated on the task in hand. Few Ambassadors in history have made so few social contacts; none has made such sincere friendships.

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

MAYNARD KEYNES had enough intellectual nergy and imaginative fertility for half a dozen utstanding careers, and he had the character to ucceed in all of them. If, like his teacher and riend, Alfred Marshall, he had been an economist ure and simple, he would merely have earned a istinguished place in the history of British hought. But he was also a man of affairs deter- nined so to express his ideas that they should ave the maximum practical influence on public olicy. Just as Adam Smith rang the death knell f mercantile economics and popularised a theory f free enterprise which suited his generation, so eynes ridiculed the absurdities of *laissez faire*, eclared that orthodox economics were founded n intellectual error, that we had passed from the e of scarcity into that of potential plenty and at nothing except inertia, stupidity and mis- pprehension kept mankind from a life of abun- ance beyond its wildest dreams. He developed obson's doctrine of under-consumption into a btle and complex economic theory. Economists ill long quarrel about its details, but almost all e now in some measure disciples of Keynes.

Keynes was a Liberal because he cared for in- llectual liberty and because he found in Liberal- n a progressive and rational tradition. But his iberalism led him to collectivist conclusions, and believed that to regard booms and slumps and employment and misery as inevitable was as olish as to believe in the iron law of wages. milarly, he held that Marxism was out of date cause it was based on the same early nineteenth- ntury fallacies. The structure of his own onomic thinking was built on his assumption at it was possible to persuade the capitalist in own interest to abandon *laissez faire* in favour planning for the public good. He detested the fficiency of unregulated capitalism only less n he dreaded the waste and suffering of a oletarian revolution. He therefore made it his e's work to save capitalism by altering its nature. e Keynsian theory of a managed currency and nned national and international housekeeping re fruit in the American New Deal, in the r economies of the Western democracies, in st-war credits, in Bretton Woods and the Inter- ional Bank. Capitalism owes its survival more Roosevelt and Keynes than to any other men.

In view of the close personal association of ynes with this journal, it may be useful to ce certain developments of his thinking by erring to some of his numerous contributions our columns. *The Economic Consequences of Peace* had already made him a world figure h an immense public before, in 1923, he ame chairman of the *Nation*, with H. D. nderson as its editor. They regarded the *tion* primarily as the vehicle for the ideas ressed in a series of Liberal Summer Schools ich were finally expounded in the Liberal llow Book. Keynes was roused to fury by the ision to return to the Gold Standard in 1925, accurately prophesied the results in a pamph- entitled *The Economic Consequences of Mr. urchill*. His demonstration that unemployment unnecessary and deflation wicked provided h Mr. Lloyd George and the Labour Party h a political platform. When the Labour ty took office in 1929 he did his best to aid m in their economic difficulties. When the *ion* was amalgamated with the NEW STATES- in 1931, he was in the midst of a furious troversy about the morality and the desir- ity of abandoning free trade for the purposes aising the revenue. His article on this subject ch appeared in the second issue of the com- ed paper (March 7th, 1931) raised a storm of se; the number of old-fashioned Liberals who up their subscriptions was about equal to number of new subscribers. It was said at time that where six economists are joined ther there are seven opinions, two of them nes'. But to accuse him of inconsistency was isunderstand. Keynes never had any love for orthodoxy, and he was fertile enough to provide several alternative solutions for a problem if his first suggestions were rejected. He denounced the absurdity of meeting a crisis of over-production by a policy of wage-cuts, and when this journal took the then very unpopular line of attacking the National Government and supporting the stand of the Labour rump, Keynes wrote enthusiastically congratulating us on what he described as the way of Reason. The Baldwin-Chamberlain policy of deflation brought him almost to despair, and he declared, as it proved rightly, that we could not paint the consequences in colours too black. "Words," he wrote on one occasion, "ought to be a little wild, for they are the assaults of thought upon the unthinking."

During the next years he developed his full monetary and economic theory, occasionally contributing lucid expositions of some aspect of it in articles to this journal. It is doubtful if any weekly newspaper has ever published a more important or more technical article than one by him entitled "The Multiplier," in which he explained, as clearly as the subject permitted, how all the wheels of industry would be set turning by deliberate expenditure on capital works at the right moment. In two scintillating contributions to the last issues of the *Nation* entitled "Economics for our Grandchildren," Keynes had declared that nothing stood between the world and unlimited prosperity except the danger of war. From 1935 the shadow of war overclouded interest in economic theory, and foreign policy became the main topic of discussion. As a Director of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION (he was never its chairman), Keynes was ready with advice, encouragement and, occasionally, with vehement criticism. But respect for editorial independence was an article of his creed; he never insisted on his view, and, except on one notable occasion, he never attempted to interfere. (This single occasion was when, after Hitler had overrun Poland, he objected to our publication of a long letter by Bernard Shaw urging that Britain should regard the war as over and withdraw. The letter, with one passage omitted, was published in our issue of October 7th, 1939, under the heading "Uncommonsense About the War.") On the few other occasions when Keynes strongly differed, he contributed signed articles. On July 10th, 1937, he wrote supporting the Baldwin policy, particularly in relation to Spain. This article appeared side by side with an editorial giving this journal's reasons for taking the opposite point of view. Nine months later Keynes contributed a second article as ingenious as the first, reversing his position, accepting our argument for collective action against Fascism in Spain and elsewhere, and outlining a foreign policy indistinguishable from our own. This change was typical of Keynes. He never hesitated to alter his mind if he felt he had been wrong. But if you wished to influence him it was seldom useful to look for holes in his arguments. He left no holes. If you could provide him with a fresh premise, however, he might accept it and reach your conclusion with a logical brilliance that you could not hope to emulate.

Recalling innumerable conversations and controversies with Keynes, one realises that differences were liable to arise on two fundamental points. Keynes became a collectivist by a process of reason, but he had no contact with the lives of working people. He believed in liberty, but not in equality. He retained some of the prejudices of the cultivated Etonian, and he never pretended to be anything but aristocratic in his social theory. His views of Soviet Russia were complex, unstable and emotional, mainly because he liked Russians. He visited Soviet Russia with his wife, Lydia Lopokova, and was anxious that the U.S.S.R. should succeed economically and grow freer and happier, but he was bitterly hostile to revolutionary methods. On this subject we both quarrelled and agreed. The second point of disagreement was closely connected with the first. He knew that the economies of orthodox capitalism and the politics of the Baldwin epoch were disastrous, and his only complaint with the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION on this head was that we were insufficiently caustic in our attacks. An optimist by nature, however, he always believed that somehow or other capitalists would cease to behave as, in fact, they did behave. He called one of his books *Essays in Persuasion*, and he spent a large part of his life in expounding his views in language which would be understood not only by the expert but by that intelligent and partially informed opinion in which he believed lay our hopes of salvation. He described himself as a Cassandra, prophesying evil, but, unlike Cassandra, he did not in his heart believe that his own unhappy prophecies would be fulfilled.

Keynes was the most formidable of antagonists, ruthless and sometimes unscrupulous in argument, and always unsparing of all that seemed to him silly or insincere. A mutual friend once remarked that in conversation when Keynes was present there was never any point in saying anything because he always thought of a better remark than yours before you had time to think of it. His wit was shattering and his capacity for rudeness unequalled. But he was completely disinterested, bore no malice however fierce the controversy, and so charming that even those he wounded could not bear a grudge. As a young man he had a reputation for invincible arrogance; in his maturity he neither suffered fools gladly nor moderated his castigation of folly, but he did learn patience and a readier sympathy. His interests and his practical achievements were innumerable. He gave Cambridge its Arts Theatre. He was chairman of C.E.M.A. and, in 1945, of the Arts Council. Through his wife, a dancer of genius, who in recent years has given up everything to making it possible for him to work to the maximum in spite of his illness, he became closely associated with the business of Ballet, and its flourishing condition in England to-day is largely his doing. His administration as Bursar of King's achieved financial miracles, and many men would have been well satisfied to have done no more with their lives than he did in the City as chairman of a great insurance company. He was responsible for more than one large farming estate, and at his own country house at Tilton he was equally ready to spend a morning showing you his rare collection of books, or in weighing Middle Whites and calculating the relations of pig food to bacon.

Keynes was certainly the ablest public servant who ever died in the service of this country. Some day, when the State archives are opened, the public will learn more of the extraordinary patience and brilliance he brought to his last tasks of "financial diplomacy" in America. It will also learn with surprise that it is possible for a man of sufficient clarity of mind and gaiety of temperament to write official dispatches on complex economic problems that are in themselves masterpieces of lucid exposition and salted with mischievous wit. Keynes had a splendid appetite for life, even at its most exacting, and he could not refrain, even in Washington or the Treasury, from pulling the leg of pretentiousness or solemnity.

For years Keynes was the centre of a group of brilliant men and women. For no reason apparently, except that Keynes had a house in Gordon Square and that Leonard and Virginia Woolf and members of the Strachey family lived near by, this group has been described as "Bloomsbury." If one judges by its intellectual standards and artistic achievements, Bloomsbury seems to stand for the belief that human affairs, public and personal, should be guided by reason, and that all that is honest and truthful should be applauded, and that all that is shoddy and meretricious should be exposed. It was in this Bloomsbury that Maynard Keynes did his best work; it was there that he lived through a second war, struggling against illness and labouring with an almost incredible concentration to avert the economic consequences of a second bad Peace.

THE EDITOR

INDIA IN SUSPENSE

THE hour of decision draws near, but India is still in suspense. Day after day, while the temperature climbs steadily above 100, the three Cabinet Ministers, with inexhaustible patience, listen to an endless procession of notables. The average Indian watches from a distance with no audible sign of emotion. When I talk to him, I sense no elation. This may seem strange, for the word has been spoken for which this nation waited so long. Independence is in sight. But "independence," as Gandhi said to me, "should have cast its shadow before." In the long months before the Cabinet Mission arrived, there was no psychological preparation. To-day there are too many clouds across the horizon—famine, unemployment and the threat of a dismembered India.

This, however, is only part of the story, and the rest of it is encouraging. At the top, among the leaders of this nation, the coming of the three Ministers, and their bearing since they came, have made a wholly favourable impression. The mood of the High Command of Congress is a temperate optimism. The three Ministers have convinced the many Indians with whom they have talked of their complete sincerity. It is, they realise, no grudging or qualified measure of independence that has been offered.

If one thing more than another has jerked well-informed Indians out of their previous distrust, it is their realisation that Britain is prepared to withdraw her army from Indian soil. The process cannot be rapid, but it will be completed by an agreed and early date. Though this has not yet been publicly stated, it has begun already to modify the outlook of the few who control policy in the upper strata of Indian life. The reaction of the Princes is obvious. They are adjusting themselves visibly to the coming of independence and seeking the good will of the sovereign people of to-morrow.

There are many awkward questions to settle, but none of them in this happier atmosphere looks intractable, save the problem of Pakistan. To whom will power be transferred, to one India or to two? The elections, vitiated though they were in some provinces by clerical and physical intimidation and also by corruption, have served to measure the balance of forces. Congress has swept the predominantly Hindu provinces and it has also won by comfortable majorities two which Mr. Jinnah claimed—Assam and the North-West Frontier. It thus controls eight of the eleven provinces and is a power to be reckoned with in the other three. Though the Muslim League secured in the Punjab, Sind and Bengal the great majority of the Muslim seats, it is nowhere securely in control. It is in the Punjab a powerful and united Opposition, while a weak coalition holds office by a narrow margin. In Sind a feeble League Ministry is in office, but it depends on the votes of three European members. Even in Bengal the League lacks an absolute majority, and could be upset by the European members.

These facts have their importance, since they mean that no independent action could be taken by these Muslim provinces to realise Pakistan. On the other hand, when votes are scrutinised, the League can fairly claim that the Muslim regions of these provinces have given a decisive verdict for Pakistan. But before it can take effect, a major surgical operation has first to be performed. The mainly Hindu and Sikh districts of the Punjab will have to be amputated—no easy undertaking. From Bengal the industrial Western region must be cut away, with the great port of Calcutta. By way of compensation, Sylhet, a solidly Muslim district of Assam, should be added to Eastern Bengal. Pakistan, so drawn, would not be the impressive State of which its advocates have dreamed. It may, however, attract other units to itself in the North-West—Baluchistan (not yet self-governing), Kashmir and even the Frontier Province, which could hardly survive in isolation if Pakistan were to cut it off from Hindustan. In the East, Calcutta, with a three in four Hindu majority, forms the crux. It cannot be handed over to Pakistan without gross injustice. But it is the emphatic view of the League's spokesmen, that without this wealthy city, Pakistan will not be capable of life.

Here is a situation that seems to ask for compromise. Silently and behind the scenes some influences on the Muslim side are working for peace, notably the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. Mr. Jinnah, however, persists in his extremist tactics, repeats his maximum claims on every public occasion and adds to them the disconcerting declaration that Pakistan will share no common institutions with Hindustan, even for the purposes of defence and foreign policy. Congress, on the other hand, has made several statements that convey its readiness to compromise. It has repeatedly said that it will not coerce any Indian province into joining the Union. It has affirmed the right of any province to secede. Above all, it promises the provinces a maximum of autonomy. It proposes that the Government of the Union shall deal only with foreign policy, defence, customs, communications and currency—a meagre list of subjects. It adds the significant suggestion that within the framework of the Union groups of provinces may, if they so choose, combine together to deal with other subjects in common.

From this outline it would be possible to evolve a reasonable compromise. It means, I think, that the Indian Union will stand half-way between a Confederacy and a true Federation. Sovereignty will reside in the Provinces or States, save in so far as they transfer certain powers to the centre. Pakistan, with its own name, its own flag, and all the customary symbols of sovereignty, could come into being within it, and so could Hindustan. The vast Indian area would, however, remain a single unit for the purposes of defence and trade. This might satisfy the passionate wish of the Muslims to form a distinct Islamic State of their own. It remains to devise provisions which will banish from their minds the fear of being out-voted by the Hindus in the governing body of the Union. This would be easier, if Ceylon and Burma, both Buddhist by creed, should one day adhere to the Union, together with Malaya.

Here, then, is a possible avenue of compromise which the three Ministers may explore. The first obstacle in the way is that the territorial limits of Pakistan have to be drawn. Some members of the Congress High Command are disposed to insist on a plebiscite. This seems to me a mistake. A reasoned debate and a fair vote are impossible in the present atmosphere of tension and bigotry. The wiser course would be to assign to a mixed Commission with a neutral chairman the duty of drawing boundaries based on the results of the provincial elections.

The next obstacle is more formidable—Mr. Jinnah's repeated refusals to enter either an interim national government or an All-India Constituent Assembly. No methods of tact or persuasion are likely to influence this obstinate man. There is just one course that might affect him. Let us suppose that a compromise solution can be worked out between the three Ministers and Congress and embodied in an agreed formula. The next step would be to form an interim National Government, which would have the right and duty to take all the necessary measures to form the Indian Union and draft its constitution. The Viceroy's veto during this interim period would come into play only if it were to depart from the agreed formula. Once it were clearly understood that on these terms the British Government will hand over power to a representative team of Indian leaders, would the Muslim League still refuse to co-operate? It is possible that Mr. Jinnah personally would stand aloof, but his lieutenants are not all made of the same stiff clay. In any event an impressive Ministry could be formed, including a fair proportion of distinguished Muslims. This would be in line with Mr. Attlee's declaration that a minority must not for ever hold up the advance of the majority.

This is not an ideal solution, but in many talks, both with Indians and Englishmen, I have heard no better suggestion. What really stands in the way? My own reading of Mr. Jinnah is that he still hopes to remain what he was in Lord Linlithgow's day, the favoured ally of the British Empire. He prophesies that Pakistan will be a better market for British goods than Hindustan. It is to be foreseen that he may complicate the issue by offering to accept Dominion Status for Pakistan, while the rest of India chooses independence. That would finally shatter the unity of the Peninsula and bring into its problems of defence an inextricable confusion. It would involve Britain in all future conflicts between Indians, and it would alienate Hindustan permanently.

It may now be inevitable that Pakistan in some form must come into being. But to create it in a shape that menaced the peace of India would be an error posterity would not forgive. Jawaharlal Nehru has just repeated the firm promise of Congress that it will never try to coerce a recalcitrant province. Behind that declaration lies the fact that any interim National Government could rely only on the Indian Army. Though it is not embittered by the feud of the creeds, over a third of its men are Muslims. Plainly it could not be used for repression. What we have to fear is a period of bickerings, alarms and economic warfare, which might end, as the years went on, in the piecemeal construction by treaties and working agreements of some species of unity for India. Facing all the difficulties, I still dare to hope for something better. It should be possible, if all our resources of inducement are used, to offer Muslims within the framework of an Indian Union an autonomous and sovereign Islamic State. H. N. BRAILSFORD

New Delhi, April 8th

HOME THOUGHTS FROM SPAIN

(Inspired by Sir William Beveridge and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Night over Spain has flooded,
  But Might may be almost Right,
And black, objectively studied,
  May come to resemble white.

In Liberal breasts there rises
  A feeling akin to pain
When doctrinaires force a crisis
  To liberate Franco's Spain.

They hearken with sad misgiving
  To queries best left unsaid,
Why the tyrant of Spain is living
  While all the rest are dead.

Press, politics, votes, religion,
  Spain will for Spain make free,
But Spain is not Britain's pigeon,
  Like Balkan democracy.

We must not abandon in blindness
  Our simple but heartfelt course
To ease from the Fascist by kindness
  The prey that he seized by force.

We learn from the days of olden,
  If freedom must be suppressed,
Non-intervention is golden,
  And Britain's silence is best.

The voices of censure hushing,
  Our *simpat* we must not stint.
And with tears of gratitude gushing
  The Caudillo will take the hint.

No longer from injury smarting,
  He will sense he has had his day—
With his tents and his Arabs departing,
  He will silently steal away.

SAGITTARIUS

A GERMAN DIARY

THE British authorities do not deny that there are still many Nazis holding important positions in industry and administration and even in the police. Their defence runs something like this: "We have already some 60,000 Nazi thugs of the worst possible character in camps, and no-one knows what to do with them. We have also dismissed many thousands of Nazis, though not as many as the Americans, who have gone so fast that for efficiency's sake they have actually had to reinstate some whom they had sacked. In our view we are to be criticised for going too fast rather than too slow. It is possible, for instance, that the terrible mining disaster that occurred recently in the Ruhr might not have happened if we had not got rid of so many Nazi echnicians. We have a long 'screening' process, cunningly devised to detect liars, and as soon as we see whom to substitute we will get rid of those whom we know to be undesirable. Many who think they have put a fast one across us will find they have made a mistake. We are now using reliable Germans to help us in the ifting process. In any case, sooner or later, he process must end. If the country is to ecome a working entity again, people must feel ecure in their jobs." I am not satisfied with his answer, and I constantly hear of cases of ery wrong people in very responsible positions. I hear, for instance, that Karl Silex, whose record o one could defend, is seriously being considered s Editor of the *Hamburger Allgemeine Zeitung*. I fully understand the argument about efficiency, nd clearly some distinction should be drawn etween technicians and people who have admini-trative authority. But the answer is that, even t the risk of some inefficiency, Military Govern-ent could appoint many experienced Trade Unionists and others with good anti-Nazi records, f they were now instructed to carry out a practical olicy of Socialism which would increase the ower of the working people.

* * *

In the middle of an untouched and beautiful ountryside, I visited General Morgan at Unrra H.Q. I am sorry to have to report that General Morgan was completely discreet. General Morgan not only a brilliant soldier, but also a man of ide culture, sincerely anxious to solve the roblem of Displaced Persons in a humane and nsible way. It is still a colossal problem. I und that I had been right in thinking that so r from complaining that the Jews had a plan escape from Germany, he had been full of miration for their extraordinary pertinacity d organising ability. But the Jews are only e bit of the problem. There are still thousands D.P.'s of every kind; refugees from the Baltic ates (the British regard them as the really od D.P.'s), and from all the Balkan and South-stern countries; some 20,000 people called stateless"; 14,000 so-called Ukrainians; ,000 classified as "undetermined"; 4,000 as miscellaneous"; 2,000-odd Central and South mericans; 1,000 classified as Turkish and a milar number as "Americans." There is even strange problem of 1,300 who claim to be menians, though Armenia, as a State, has no istence. There is also a strange variety of ildren of all nationalities, often with no parents. mongst these the oddest little problem are "mas-ts," who have been taken up by the various lied armies. I heard of one boy of about ten o has long lived with the American Army, okes, drinks beer and swears like an American dier, claims to come from Cincinnati and proudly ows off a notebook of addresses given to him Americans who have told him to look them up en he gets back to the States. In fact he is ssian and has never been outside Europe. me of these children have wandered through ry city of Europe from Moscow to Paris. is particular boy broke out of the home he placed in; he would have nothing to with children. He broke off a doorknob, which he used very effectively as a revolver, extorting food from German peasants.

* * *

I visited a Displaced Persons Camp, very efficiently run by a young British officer. It was a Polish camp, and I made enquiries about their readiness to return to Poland. I learned that most of these people were imported as slaves by Hitler, and their objection to going home is not, as a rule, political. They want to return to their homes, but are deterred by their fear that conditions there will be much worse than those in the camps. I am not surprised. They are fed better than the great majority of people in Europe, and provided, as far as possible, with a very decent, safe, communal life. The women were sitting in a large room with their children, knitting garments from wool provided for them. The men, when I arrived, were I think working in the fields. I saw a neat room of fair size inhabited by a complete Polish family. They were better off than Polish peasants have ever been in Poland. The British do not compel anyone to return against his will, but they give a good deal of encouragement to D.P.s to go home. When some hundreds have agreed, a train is made ready for them. Then someone, as in a recent case ex-President Hoover, makes a public statement about famine conditions in Poland, and only a dozen turn up for the train.

* * *

Amongst the relief organisations the Swedes are by all accounts doing a remarkable job. They bring their own transport and supplies, and in Dortmund alone, I am told, provide meals for some 15,000 children. In the same town I visited a small group of the Friends' Ambulance Unit who are also doing an excellent job. One of the things I learnt from them was an interesting experiment in brewing milk. The famous Dortmund Union Brewery has, of course, no grain for brewing beer for Germans, but some beer for British troops is made—according to the authorities entirely from grain brought up from barges from the bottom of canals and quite unfit for eating. I hope this is true, because the Germans naturally resent the use of any grain for beer when there is so little for bread. From the Friends I learnt some of the details of this new milk substitute "Maltevina." It is made of malted wheat and soya bean flour. First experiments were made by a scientist in Italy. They were carried on in Britain, and some tests were made at the Gt. Ormond Street Children's Hospital. The Dortmund Union Brewery is making small quantities of Maltevina, and some is being fed to babies in Dortmund. The results, so far, are encouraging. A baby over three months will live for a few weeks on artificial milk alone, but it is more useful for older children, and it works best when mixed with half natural milk. The doctor in charge even says that children fed on the mixture of Maltevina and natural milk actually do better than those fed solely on ordinary milk.

* * *

In the rather nauseatingly ritzy atmosphere of the Atlantic Hotel in Hamburg a British correspondent recently had the unpleasant experience of sharing a table with a young British officer so completely drunk that within the first minute of acquaintance he borrowed fifty marks to buy another bottle of champagne. "Two bottles a day . . . that's what the German people owes me," was the somewhat incoherent explanation, coupled with the assurance that a "pal" would soon appear with five thousand marks to be spent in the course of the night. "All out of cigarettes at 8 marks apiece . . never touch a penny of my pay . . . all goes straight into the bank . . ." these and other volunteered confidences were followed by the assurance that there was no reason to be afraid of, as "all th'other fellows are doing it." A few days later my newspaper colleague reported this experience to a senior British officer in charge of a small country district; he hoped for a confirmation of his suspicion that the young drunkard had been wildly exaggerating. But the Major shook his head sadly: "You should see the hundreds of parcels going home from here every week," he said. "I know very well that the men can't buy anything in the shops out here. It's all loot or traded for cigarettes: fountain-pens, watches, crockery, cutlery, linen, even furniture. And there's nothing I can do about it." Then, glancing reproachfully at my colleague's War Correspondent's badge, he added: "When the Germans used to do this sort of thing you fellows made a big fuss of it. Now our men are doing the same thing, but the papers never mention it. It makes me feel ashamed."

* * *

An American journalist whom I met in the Ruhr truly remarked that no one yet has found a way of even remotely conveying the emotions evoked by the sight of a great city that has been not "damaged," but "destroyed" by bombs. The best descriptive attempt I have seen was written by Peter de Mendelssohn in this journal (July 14th, 1945). Photography gives selected bits or a general impression from the air. Someone asked what painter, if we could choose, would best have solved the problem. On the whole we plumped for El Greco. But in Berlin the Tiergarten gave me a different idea; for, half its length the trees have been smashed down to jagged stumps, and the area is thickly pock-marked with craters. Amongst the stumps and the craters there lie fantastically the remains of the statues, some broken and some still upright, which were once a peculiar object of enjoyment to the Berliner on his Sunday afternoon walk. They lie there in distorted attitudes—the military heroes of Germany's past, the torsos of Greek gods, and, with an astonishingly bizarre effect, strange prehistoric beasts surveying with stony eyes the abomination of desolation around them. The painter for this, as Barbara Ward has pointed out to me, is obviously Dali. Indeed, he and other surrealists have already painted it. The monster's head with the lily growing from the mouth is here, not in fancy, but in grotesque reality. The surrealists portrayed their evil and prophetic dreams and were accused of being degenerates, gloating over a half-desired world destruction. Their dreams have come true. They are now the most photographic of realists.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. E. Berry.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Great Fun. Make believe you are in New York. Envelope and letterhead of New York hotel sent. You write, and return. We mail in New York.—Price 2*s.* 6*d.* . . .—Personal Column of *The Kensington News* and *West London Times*.

Why is the Ministry of Food spending public money to advertise the use of alcoholic liquor? Its latest venture in drink-propaganda concerns a recipe for Beef Stew. After setting out certain ingredients, it says: "Something Father will appreciate is a little cider or beer added; the alcohol is all evaporated by the cooking, but the manly flavour remains."

Such a stew, shared by the whole family, would be just the thing to induce the young folk to drink, and so in due time add to the already appallingly long queue at the doors of our overcrowded Borstal institutions.—From *Methodist Recorder*.

Guests' dogs are charged for at the rate of either 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* each day, according to the size and social standing of the dog.—Tariff of a Torquay guest house.

Sherborne Old Girl needs temporary domestic help some mornings; Surbiton; ex-public school girl preferred.—*Surrey Comet*.

FENS AND FOOD

As there are recognised in industry "special areas," needing help from their neighbours to overcome unusual handicaps, so there are special areas in farming. It is not just a matter of poor land, which may not be worth farming at all. It may be quite good land, before which nature has interposed special obstacles—land, as Mr. Tom Williams said in the Commons recently, "which no private farmer or number of farmers would equip"; land successfully brought into production during the war, but where—times of great need apart—"none but the State can provide proper equipment to see that the land is cultivated *over the years.*" He gave some parts of the Fens as an instance.

From the grassy flood-banks of the Cam, eight miles or so below Magdalene Bridge, you can look down over acres and acres of such land, seamed with well-cut dykes and dotted with straw-stacks. You stand about level with the eaves of the stacks. It is not the best fenland; not like the "good fen," north of Ely, where centuries of cultivation have built up a tilth worth £100 an acre; but good enough to produce 5 quarters of wheat an acre, or eight of potatoes or ten of beet.

Seven years ago, most of this land you see was either right out of cultivation, water-logged, overgrown with bushes or reeds or bog-thistles, or at least fallen down to rough grass, affording only a few weeks' grazing in the year. When the County's War Agricultural Executive Committee surveyed one area of 3,200 acres early in 1940, they found only a quarter under useful crops or clean enough for cropping. Over 700 acres were completely derelict; as much again was land formerly under the plough, now degenerated to twitch or coarse grass; a thousand more acres were going the same way, and were too foul to carry a fair crop. Seven-eighths of the land suffered from bad or inadequate drainage.

There is now in all this stretch of fen (except at Wicken, where the National Trust has a bird sanctuary) hardly an acre not bearing useful crops. About 900 acres the "War Ag." took over and farmed themselves through foremen; the rest remained in the hands of the farmers, who have played in well with the Committee all through. It was a notable reinforcement to Britain's food. Will the advance be maintained? The old obstacles, which have been largely removed, were too much water, bog oak, and no roads. The new obstacles are higher overheads and lower man-power. The land has certainly been made worth more to the nation. Is it worth more to the farmer?

One farm in the Cambridge fens was bought in 1939 for £1,785; about 236 acres. It was by no means derelict, but in poor order, water-logged in parts, and invaded by rough marsh grass and bushes. The farmer spent five years' work and £1,100 to improve the land and buildings and then sold it. The best offer he could get was £1,300; nearly £500 less than he paid for it. There are various complex factors in this surprising outcome; but the capital cost of moving the obstacles which nature set between the land and the farmer (a cost in part still to be paid off) is certainly important among them.

The fens lie barely above sea-level. Their flats are overlooked, not only by the Cam banks but also by the lodes, the banked-up channels which carry through them the drainage from the uplands. The fens themselves drain towards the river, and the water must be pumped up to fall into it. Until the Great Ouse Catchment Board took over the job from the inadequate local drainage commissioners (under Lord Addison's Land Drainage Act of 1930) most of the land was fearfully wet. It is well-drained now. But the drainage rate, which was 5*s.* in the pound not many years ago, is 18*s.* 6*d.* now. Part of this rate meets the cost of draining, not the fens themselves, but the higher ground lying behind them.

On part of this land, oak-forest once grew, standing on the clay. The fallen oaks were preserved in the peat which overgrew the clay. Lying six inches or a foot below the surface, they made it impossible to plough thoroughly until they had been laboriously extracted; often they had to be sawn up where they lay, or riven by explosives, before a tractor could get them out. Some fields cost £10 or even £20 an acre to clear.

Before the war, the hard roads stopped at the fens' edge. From there on, the only way was by soft peat droves, so foul in wet weather that traffic was at a standstill for half the year. If you got a good crop, you couldn't draw it out after September. Horses and light carts might struggle through, with mud up to the horses' bellies; laden trucks stuck; sometimes root crops ripening late were left in the ground, because they could not be moved if harvested. The War Ag. put down 50 miles of concrete roads, 9 ft. wide with passing places, along the main droves of the fens. Now you can get a crop out at all times of the year.

But improvements have to be paid for. The roads were made by the Ministry of Agriculture under an Act which laid down that the owners of the land should make contributions to the cost, based on the betterment or improved value as a result of the road-making. The land-owner has a right of appeal against the valuation, and in fact certain appeals are now pending against the assessments already made.

The War Ag. hopes, before giving up control of the land, to do a good deal of research into outstanding problems of fen farming. "Blowing," for instance, is a great pest, perhaps aggravated by better drainage. In a dry spring, strong winds blow clean away the light, friable, peaty topsoil, seeds, fertiliser and all, compelling the farmer to plant crops two or even three times over. One indignant gardener told me he had had five standard roses in a group of twelve blown right out of the ground—"as if they'd been scooped out." Various means to check this are to be tried; planting trees as wind-breaks; bringing up clay from the subsoil to mix with the superficial peat; experiments to determine the best water-level to maintain. This work needs a central supervision and scientific approach which could hardly be obtained from individual owners.

To keep this land fully productive needs men as well as money. The older farms have in general retained their man-power, supplemented by a few auxiliaries—prisoners of war, conscientious objectors, or Women's Land Army. (A small but useful reinforcement comes from land-workers' wives, employed often part-time, direct and not through W.L.A.) The newly improved farms have had a lot of extra labour. One 670-acre farm run by the War Ag. has on it one foreman, four local farm workers and five tractor-drivers, a score or so of W.L.A. and about as many prisoners. These are all for current farming, not for reclamation. The W.L.A. and the prisoners will not stay for ever; and though there is not at present an acute shortage of farm workers locally, there is certainly no surplus. But it will need at least a score to keep this land producing at anything like its present level.

Even if a score of men appeared, they would need housing. The fen villages have few houses to spare. The Newmarket Rural District Council, in which most of this country lies, have plans for 400 houses, and have invited tenders for 44; the district is a big one, and it will be years at this rate before the fen villages get enough new cottages to house the men the land needs—not to speak of replacing the many cottages already condemned as unfit to live in.

In this corner of England, housing and conditions of work are probably a bigger consideration than wages. I don't mean that the farm workers are insincere in their claim that £3 10*s.* a week is too low a minimum; compared with other employments of equivalent skill, it is. But the war has seen a big increase in the amount of work done on piece-rates; the minimum tends to become a "fall-back." One farmer told me that his men are now on piece-rates for three-quarters of the year. The rates themselves (not being based on collective agreements) have also increased markedly. Before the war, for instance, sugar-beet was hoed at 10*s.* an acre and lifted at 30*s.* to 40*s.* an acre. To-day, men might get 32*s.*–40*s.* an acre for hoeing, and £4–£6 for lifting. Current prices for the main fen crops (wheat, potatoes, beet, barley) are high enough to cover these rates. One trouble is that piece-work cannot be as well applied to all types of farm work; stockmen are generally on time rates, and often have the most exacting work. This is perhaps where a differential minimum could with advantage be negotiated.

Besides wages and housing, the farm workers now want a decent education for their children. The "village colleges" are Cambridgeshire's original contribution to rural schooling; there are five so far, and one stands at Bottisham, on the edge of the fens. The junior wing takes about 200 children of school age; the senior wing runs adult classes of all kinds—handicrafts, agriculture, languages, music and drama; of 280 students attending these, two-thirds are under 21, so it looks as if a real link is being forged between school and adult education. There have been two interesting war-time developments. The college has been, and remains, the focus of the pre-service organisations for boys (Air Training Corps, Army Cadet Corps); and now that the War Office has decided that the bulk of the cadets' training time is to be spent in "recreational training," the youth clubs run by the college will be the instrument for this side of the work.

The other experiment is the Special Class (about 20 boys and girls) for potential teachers. The idea is to get for the county not only more teachers, but teachers with a rural background, so that country schools may be served by countrymen. It was found that children straight from the rural schools had too much leeway to make up, even if they had the innate ability to qualify for a teacher's training course. These Special Class children will stay at the Village College till 16, then the best of them will go on to a school in Cambridge for two years, until ready for a teachers' training college. Even if the county only gets four or five teachers out of it, the leavening of older children has been fruitful for the school. It has been possible to delegate some minor responsibilities to the 15-year-olds, and the sense of responsibility spreads if it has not too big a gap to jump. Altogether, the work of the village colleges seems an important aid to the task of bringing country life up to date without urbanising it.

PATRICK MONKHOUSE

CRIME DETECTION IN THE EAST

I WAS commanding a small quasi-military unit i Calcutta last summer. One of my clerks, named Sohn Lal, complained to me that his wallet containing two hundred rupees had been stolen out of the pocket of his jacket while he was aslee during the midday break. He was a good fellow, about twenty-three years of age, and due to b married shortly. I knew that he was saving wha he could out of his meagre pay in order to me the wedding expenses and avoid recourse to th *banya.* There are, I am glad to say, many youn Indians who are revolting against the custom living permanently in debt, and I was consequently most disturbed at this young man's loss.

I did not fancy my chances of discovering th thief, but made such inquiries as I could. The undoubtedly pointed to another clerk, Om Prak ash, as the culprit. There was no proof, how ever, and I felt that it would be a waste time to tax him with the theft. Into the barga I might well have had to face a charge of slande with every possibility of conviction owing to th system of purchasing witnesses which has result from the introduction of a Western legal co into India.

The obvious course was to call in the police; but my chief assistant, an Indian for whom I have the highest regard, implored me not to do so. I doubt if many in this country have any comprehension of the loathing with which the police are regarded in India. Through corruption to an extent which passeth understanding, the police are the greatest enemies of the people. If I reported the theft, I knew well what would happen. One or two of my staff, probably the lowest paid, would be taken off to the police station. There they would certainly be beaten up, but, what is even worse, money would be demanded from their relatives—father, brother, wife, all of them—if they lived in different towns or villages.

This insidious blackmail might last for a year or longer. The practice is for the police to visit the relations of the accused and demand money o get the accused out of trouble. Twenty-five upees, fifty, whatever the constable thinks the amily is good for. Monthly visits follow, with he threat to take the unfortunate one into custody gain unless some payment is made. Ignorance, ack of moral courage, and, worse, the certainty hat refusal to pay will in the end be twice as ostly, all in varying degrees pander to this black-ail. I was fairly knowledgeable about the ethods used by the police, and I did not intend o call in this agency.

It became known, however, that I had men-ioned this hated force, and at tea-time along ame the Chowkidar. He was from Nepal and ad served his time in the 3rd Gurkha Regi-ent, a fine representative of some of the finest oldiers in the world. After the usual prelimin-ries, the Chowdikar expressed concern at this heft, and gave me to understand that it was a eflection on himself personally. He said that e would call for the help of the gods and there-ith cast a spell which would disclose the culprit he belonged to the unit.

I can't say that I had much belief in the old an and his magic, as I then considered it, but e was most earnest in his request for the oppor-unity to show what the gods would do to prove e uprightness of his watching, and at last I greed that all of us—some twenty or thereabouts —should appear in the courtyard at sundown that vening.

The old man had staged it well. A fire of char-al was burning in the centre, and beside it as a large flat mud cake, about three feet in dia-eter, supported on bricks. The staff was all sembled, and the Chowdikar made a speech. It arted with a homily on the iniquity of theft, con-nued with a trenchantly expressed disparage-ent of the police and ended with his account of e appeal to the gods, who would discover the ief. He called upon us to form up in single e, and one at a time to pass right round the fire. hen we came to the mudstone, each was to spit ereon. The thief, said the old man, would spit ood.

I went first, and must confess I was relieved to d that I had passed the test. It was silly even be apprehensive, but there was something in-finable in the atmosphere which made me, and think all of us, feel eerie. I then stood beside Chowdikar. Five or six had made the circuit, spitting appropriately, when someone near the d of the line began to sway as if he was about faint. I went over, and found Om Prakash. was moaning, and said that he felt so ill that must lie down. My first thought was to sup-rt him round the fire, so that all should have rformed the rite. I took his arm and felt that was trembling as one does in a fever. The owdikar said in a loud voice, "Let him be to his charpoy while the rest stay here." So we went, Om Prakash, the Chowdikar and I. Prakash started to cry—tears come easy to Indian—and to mumble about funeral rites his dead father. We took him to his room, there he produced the wallet with the two ndred rupees. He became quite ill, but with complaint that could be diagnosed. However, had found the thief.

BRITISH OFFICER

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Exercise 'Bowler'" at the Arts Theatre Club.

The chief protagonists in this play are three soldiers from the back of the auditorium. They hold up the progress of a five-year-old sentimental theatrical cliché about War, the Soldier's Glory, and fill out three acts in their own way. Act I goes to their picture of War as the soldier knows it; during Act II they enact, at the request of the Manager, their struggles with the return to civilian life. Act III dissolves, as it has to, into rather misty allegory. Dialogue and characterisation throughout are strong and are perhaps the play's chief merit.

The presentation is in the familiar, but here excellently controlled, impressionistic and episodic "camera-sequence" method, with much use of spotlight and black-out. Moreover, in this case the method is not a piece of meretricious showmanship but as stylish, well-mannered and honest as the author's whole design. I found the play exciting, with a sensible and brave thing to say and a way of saying it that is fine and moving theatre. Where the Mercury season's playwrights have used, for the most part, religious tradition and verse technique as vehicles for their slightly nebulous aspirations towards a new order, this piece employs contemporary idiom. The first two acts, with their edgy quality of tension and dramatic honesty, are well-constructed and achieve that rare effect of convincing one that this is perhaps as near the truth as one can approach within the theatrical convention. The brief glimpses of Army bickering, nervous exhaustion, terror and revulsion and of the even uglier battle with post-war horrors are often bitter, always too passionate to be called cynical and never over-emphatic. The anti climax and loss of tension in the last act is partly inevitable, for we have been roused to a pitch of expectation that no solution to the problem, however glib (and the authors are mercifully not glib), could possibly satisfy. The authors have it in their favour that they do not attempt to put Q.E.D. at the end of their final burst of slightly confusing Socialist allegory combined with echoes of the Christian doctrine.

Mr. Peter Powell's production copes admirably with the smallness of the Arts stage. Among the actors one notices in particular the conviction and ease of Mr. Torin Thatcher and Mr. William Fox, and the persuasiveness of a study in the macabre from Mr. Geoffrey Keen.

SIRIOL HUGH JONES

ROUND THE GALLERIES

THERE is not much in the way of art exhibitions this week in London outside the Tate Gallery. Braque has stolen the limelight and will continue to hold it for a long time. At the Leicester Galleries is an exhibition of paintings by Robin Darwin. Darwin, as anyone will agree who remembers his pre-war studies of ballet dancers, has immense technical ability. He can do anything he likes with paint within the strict limits he imposes on himself—witness his "Dovey Estuary" and "Rendezvous hellénique." So highly skilled is he in the application of paint to canvas that a few brave experiments might have produced interesting results. But it has to be admitted that Darwin has progressed but little in the last ten years, and that he is still gracefully working over the ground that as pioneers Degas and Forain once covered. "After the Bath," "Nude with Towel," "Nude combing her Hair"—even the titles strike the familiar chord of 1890. (Presumably the surrealist touch in the title of No. 1 in the catalogue: "Model in a Sofa," is unintentional.) It is not fair to blame the artist entirely for these shortcomings; we should also blame the smart collector who pines for the perfect sketch and leans over the artist's shoulder whispering advice: "My dear, don't touch it, you'll *ruin* it." In this way the sketchy landscape becomes, not as it should be, a coherent structure within which a final conclusive form is implied, but an exquisite gem of good taste complete in itself. So what is a poor artist to do? He can commit fragrant acts of bad taste, he can build up his pictures on a more solid foundation, he can search for a means of expression in harmony with the spirit of his age—yet how easy it is to lay down rules and how fiendishly difficult to follow them!

In the inner room at the Leicester Galleries is a memorial exhibition of paintings by Thérèse Lessore, who was Sickert's wife. Very seldom in the history of art have women forged for themselves an independent artistic existence—I can think only of Sofonisba Anguissola of whom Van Dyck said that he had learnt more from her than from anything in Rome—and independence is not the quality most striking about Thérèse Lessore. Here is a question for a Brains' Trust: why has Europe produced so many great poetesses but no paintresses? Her pictures are the ghostly reflection of her husband's, more like tapestry and embroidery with their pale delicate tones and coarse canvases, and judged purely as decoration, are attractive.

At the Redfern Gallery the Belgian painter, Paul Delvaux, is holding an exhibition of some of his recent works. He is a desiccated version of Chirico, who paints nude women against a background of spacious landscapes and classicistic architecture in steep perspective. Delvaux refuses to be classed as a surrealist and his tragedy is his complete isolation in an age when artists can no longer afford this luxury. I suspect that his refusal to identify himself with any group or movement accounts for his lack of vitality, an accusation that could never be levelled against a talented surrealist.

BENEDICT NICOLSON.

RADIO NOTES

IN recent years I suppose few dramatised broadcasts have, as a series, enjoyed a more consistent success than *Appointment with Fear*. Judicial persons may wag fingers at Grand Guignol entertainment, but there is no question that it supplies a felt need, even when world events are busy outdoing it on its own ground. Essentially, too, drama is concerned with this type of story, whether it be obvious, as in *The Bells*, or cloaked by fine diction and elaborate psychology, as in *The Duchess of Malfi* and modern plays like Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. The shapes of violence lurk in the shadows behind the lightest of comedies, as they do behind a mere outburst of exasperation. In a sense that was more apparent in earlier centuries than it is now; the drama of Blood and Terror is the most moral, as it is the most stirring to the senses. We are warned, as it were, against ourselves. Radio, with its considerable powers of suggestion, lends itself easily to any "atmosphere"—intellectual or emotional—which is producible by the nuances of the voice. Music and other effects are always subsidiary, even in *Appointment with Fear*: our withers remain unwrung if the voices are not expertly sinister and expertly frightened. The Man in Black sets the tone, and producer Martyn Webster seldom fails to carry it through the piece. In casting and in subtle methods of crescendo he is among the best producers on the air, but when he permits the note to be forced—as it was, recently, in the *Cask of Amontillado*—we are landed in the worst that radio can do. Even that programme had its effective moments, towards the end; but a good deal of it displayed the ease with which, when actors begin listening to their own voices, the studio can become like a tank full of sea-lions at feeding time.

As a grotesque comment on our power to frighten ourselves, like children with a mask, the Werewolf broadcast was uncommonly effective. Dr. Koch himself could hardly provide a more fantastic medley of improbable sounds than Rayner Heppenstall contrived to assemble for this gala. The note of fulsome satire, inevitably introduced by Arthur Marshall, gave us the clue to Mr. Dehn's attitude to his subject; while the music of Anthony Hopkins threaded skilfully in between the howls and maniac laughter, the voices of Reason and of Innocence, and many others, frankly unplaceable, vocalisations.

Among those self-effacing broadcasts which quite often distinguish the late evening I derived much quiet pleasure from Mr. and Mrs. Compton Mackenzie's programme on William Cory. The mild and sentimental, but courageous, author of *Ionica* emerged clearly as a character, both from Mrs. Compton Mackenzie's biographical sketch and from her husband's charming delivery of the verses. The effect was agreeably muffish, like that of an embroidered kettle-holder.

The broadcast of the *St. Matthew Passion* was a fine example of how well a big choir can sound over the air, if only sufficient care is taken, as it seldom is. On the whole I thought the soloists fell below the standard of the rest; but there was no mistaking the well-studied nature of the performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*Sunday, April 28th.* Symphony Concert (2.30 p.m.); Country Auctioneer (7 p.m.); The Challenge of Our Time (Prof. J. B. S. Haldane, 9.15 p.m.).

Monday, April 29th. The Wallace Case (9.15 p.m.); Hirsch String Quartet (11.25 p.m.).

Tuesday, April 30th. Russia and America To-day (L.P., 3 p.m.); Christianity in Europe (10.15 p.m.); Herzen (V. S. Pritchett, 11.3 p.m.).

Wednesday, May 1st. Arthur Bliss Recital (1.15 p.m.); Book Talk (William Plomer, 6.20 p.m.); Symphony No. 2 (Gordon Jacob, 7.50 p.m.).

Thursday, May 2nd. Concert (7.10 p.m.).

Friday, May 3rd. In the Margin (6.20 p.m.); Science Survey (L.P., 6.30 p.m.); The Reluctant Stork (9.30 p.m.); Senior & Co. (11.30 p.m.).

Saturday, May 4th. Symphony Concert (2.30 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE MOVIES

"Fric-Frac" and "Land of Promise," at the Academy

"Gilda," at the Tivoli and the New Gallery

Between the strained American worship of violence (I shall come in a moment to its latest example) and the French fondness for a crook there is a world of emotional difference. In the French films all is innocent, carefree, lyrical, down-at-heels. A shabby individual joins the street-singer's circle and abstracts a five-franc note from a purse while, gazing skywards, he warbles "Sous les toits." A school for thieves provides lessons in the art of rustling and tripping with all the proprieties belonging to a music academy. A magistrate on holiday falls in with a gang and ends by burgling his own mansion. A master-crook engages to recover a strayed lottery ticket. This is the world of picaresque fancy to which *Fric-Frac* adds a new and delightful anecdote. Here, *le cyclisme* brings together a guileless jeweller's assistant (Fernandel) and two of the fraternity (Arletty and Michel Simon) who are working hand in glove to keep their master cracksman provided with delicacies in jail. We see them first at the *vélodrome,* all three shouting themselves hoarse over the spectacle of cyclists tailing motor-bikes. (Did this typically Parisian sport ever come your way in pre-war visits abroad?) Then, the jeweller's daughter making a foursome, they bike out to the woods on Sunday morning, with that admixture of nattiness, bad temper and amorous adaptability which in France comes before even the bicycle. This is one of the most delectable scenes I have come across in any film for a long while; but all through *Fric-Frac* sustains its light-fingered gaiety and provides a model of easy acting. Fernandel is at his best, especially in moments of simmering passion.

The other film at the Academy is Paul Rotha's *Land of Promise,* which applies the methods of *Land of Plenty* to housing in Britain, and, like the earlier film, has the supreme merit—supreme, I mean, in the cinema—of making one open one's eyes and think. Only Disney, in his film on air power, has surpassed the vivid appeal exercised here by voices, interviews, moving isotypes, flashes to and fro in space and time. The whole problem of housing as it has emerged in the last thirty years is presented cinematically, and a considerable amount both of fact and argument are packed into 70 or 80 minutes of film. The argument for putting human lives before profits and for controlled planning seems to be unanswerable. Mr. Miles Malleson, emerging from behind a newspaper as a bluff suburbanite, gives most of the objections to doing anything in a large way, and Mr. John Mills delivers the commentary with dramatic incisiveness.

And *Gilda?* Sultry weather for all. The characters loathe one another with spy-holes, yells, sword-sticks, bare fists, velvet paws, and this—we are told at the end—is just love-play. Gilda herself (Rita Hayworth) has the allure of cheap perfume. Here are the parted lips, the divided bosom, the hair flop, the hip rotation, the mesmeric glance, the sad ballad: all done to order. But the point about this strip-tease is that it never gets started: that and, of course, the sadism, three bags full.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

THE FRANCO REGIME

SIR,—I should like to protest as strongly as possible against Sir William Beveridge's article in the *Observer.* It is one of the most disingenuous writings I have ever seen from a Liberal pen. May I take, as a sample, one or two particular statements of his? First, he intimates that the head of the Spanish "Government" in Paris, Señor Giral, was personally responsible for the death, after they had been taken prisoner, of 400 officers of the Spanish Navy. Now these officers were executed, after fair trial, for rebellion against the legal Government of Spain. Moreover, from the first moment of this rebellion, sympathisers with the Republic were being murdered wholesale without any trial at all by the rebel side. I can vouch for this because I was in Malaga at the time of the execution of these officers and because I have read a book by a Jesuit priest who was imprisoned with them and who testifies to the humane and decent way in which these inevitable executions were carried out. He even says that the Public Prosecutor visited the condemned men to ask their forgiveness.

Secondly, Sir William Beveridge states that after the Civil War in the United States the last penalties were not abolished until 1898. What is the meaning of this remark in this context? Sir William Beveridge must know that only half a dozen Southerners were imprisoned after the end of the war and none shot, and that a general amnesty was proclaimed three years later. The penalties he speaks of were electoral and soon ceased to be enforced. Now take the Spanish case. Franco has executed tens of thousands since his victory in 1938 and according to the late American Ambassador—a Catholic by no means unfriendly to the Franco regime—some 300,000 were still in prison in 1942. And the terror still goes on. A few weeks ago I had a conversation with a Spanish Liberal who had just left Spain. He described to me how almost every day men were arrested and beaten up at Police Headquarters until they were ready to sign declarations of their own guilt in the presence of a judge. If they refused to sign, they were taken back and beaten again.

Then the question of freedom to criticise the regime. Sir William Beveridge is careful not to mention the fact that this freedom applies only to persons who support the Nationalist Movement. Anyone else criticises it at his peril, and if he is overheard doing so, then those same police whom Sir William Beveridge tells us are so extremely popular take him to their headquarters and beat him up. And naturally no Liberal can hold the post of professor at a university.

I agree entirely with what Sir William Beveridge says of certain things that are happening in Eastern Europe. If we can do anything to prevent them, we ought to. But how can these things be used to justify what is happening in Spain—eight years after the end of the Civil War? No Liberal can think like this and hold his head up, and if Sir William Beveridge has yielded to the siren voices in Madrid, who are adepts at every sort of flattery, and who know how to discover their victim's weaker side, one can only say how very wise the people of North Berwick were in not returning him to Parliament.

A postscript. If the Government wishes to get rid of Franco all it has to do is to forget about foreign trade and apply pressure. Ambassador Hayes's new book shows how extremely sensitive the regime was during the war to any threat of petrol sanctions. But this will not bring in the Giral Government; nothing, in my opinion, short of war can do that. It will probably produce a Monarchist regime with elections, which the Socialist party and most of the Republican party will accept and collaborate with. If we are to have a foreign policy that consorts with our national ideals and way of life, this, I submit, is what we ought to do. If we don't do it, we shall in the end find ourselves actively supporting a Fascist regime, because the whole of the Spanish Left, which is at present looking to Britain, will have turned to Russia.

GERALD BRENAN

Aldbourne,
Marlborough.

MIHAILOVITCH

SIR,—In a letter published in your issue of April 20th, Lieutenant-Commander L. J. Harper states that he was with General Mihailovitch or his staff from August or September, 1943, until January, 1945, adding that during this period "we certainly fough the Germans."

His Majesty's Government decided in the winter of 1943 that the conduct of General Mihailovitch and his commanders made it preferable not to retain British officers with his forces. According to my information, all British officers and other ranks with these forces were withdrawn as quickly as possible after this decision had been reached. At any rate, I was instructed by wireless early in 1944 to assur Marshal Tito that their evacuation had been completed.

Yet Lieutenant-Commander Harper tells us tha he was "with the General himself or with his staf every single day" until January, 1945. An erro certainly seems to have crept in somewhere.

House of Commons. FITZROY MACLEAN

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

SIR,—Mr. Winterton rejects the view that "Social-Democracy and Communism are two facets of th same Left-wing movement, and that they can wor together on a compromise basis." He insists tha they have "next to nothing in common and are a two political extremes," that in the contest betwee them "only one can survive," and that Communism is the enemy of democracy and Western civilisation Those are also Mr. Churchill's and Mr. Bevin's views.

I prefer the realism of *The Times,* which in its leade of March 6th, rejecting Mr. Churchill's call to arm at Fulton against Communism and the U.S.S.R. observed that to regard "Western democracy" an "Communism" as irreconcilable opposites doome to a fatal contest was an assumption of despair.

The hard fact is that Socialist reconstruction i Europe is possible only through unity of actio between Socialists and Communists, leading, i successful, to the formation of united working-cla parties. This policy can be carried out only on th basis of Anglo-Franco-Soviet co-operation to implement the Anglo-Soviet and Franco-Soviet alliances b consolidating and expanding them into all-Europe arrangements supplemented by West and Ea European groupings. Experience of Soviet foreig policy before and during the war and of Socialis Communist co-operation in the resistance movemen and post-liberation coalitions shows that this polic would not be easy, but is perfectly feasible if th Labour Government will make up its mind to bre with national unity with the Tories in foreign affai and be loyal to its declared principles and pledges i international relations.

On the other hand, pre-war and post-war e perience alike shows that the policy of a Weste Bloc is in fact based by those responsible for i whatever some of its West European Social-Dem cratic advocates or apologists may think or wa on systematic hostility to Soviet influence and Co munist Parties in Europe, and leads to splitting t working class and degrading Social-Democrats to t role of quislings of foreign military occupation a collaborators with the forces of reaction. For in t greater part of Europe, including France, workin class leadership, is now in Communist hands. Socialists and Communists quarrel, Socialist reco struction in Europe is impossible and reaction a Fascism may get back into power, in France a Belgium and in Western Germany as well as in Cent and Eastern Europe.

The Communist Parties of France and Belgi are in fact so resolutely opposed to a Western Bl unless it is part of an all-European arrangeme formed in partnership with the U.S.S.R., that could be formed, if at all, only on the basis of a s in the forces of the Left in Western Europe leadi to the triumph of the Right. In this country t the politically effective demand for a Western B without or against the U.S.S.R. is mainly Cons vative. It represents the foreign policy of c tinuity and national unity with the Tories be practised by the Foreign Office through Mr. Bev

Its fundamental aims and ideological justification are the same as those of Mr. Churchill's Anglo-American alliance, although the F.O. rely more on their own power of manoeuvre and less on Uncle Sam's mailed fist than the old class-warrior dreaming of a new war of anti-Communist intervention.

I don't see that the Western Bloc pudding as baked by Mr. Bevin from the Tory-Foreign Office recipe is any less deadly to international Socialism because my friends G. D. H. Cole and Kingsley Martin pour sympathetic Social-Democratic sauce over it, while Paul Winterton spices it with ideological fanaticism. Nor have I any faith in the experiment of launching an *Ersatz* rump Weimar Republic made in Whitehall, based on Belsen rations, military occupation, political frustration, economic stagnation, national partition, class disunity, a free hand for clerical "non-political" and "technically indispensable Nazi" reaction, and a flock of pocket Eberts and Noskes whose subservience to the Allied Military Government has already earned them the nickname of "His Majesty's Social Democracy." What a dish to set before the German workers as Labour's contribution to Socialist reconstruction in Europe!

Anyone conversant with the facts knows that Europe in the spring of 1946 proves how tragically right Harold Laski was when he wrote in the *International Socialist Forum* of January, 1943:

> The hour of victory may well prove the hour of danger unless the workers are ready to act. At present they are gravely divided. Ideological differences still keep Socialist and Communist apart. . . . If, when the war ends, there is to be a continuance of that fratricidal strife which did so much to wreck the labour movements of Italy and Germany, and to blunt their strength elsewhere, the result of the war for freedom may well be the achievement only of a more bitter slavery.

To-day, the official leadership of the Labour Party, without any mandate whatsoever from the rank and file to do so, are trying to rekindle that fratricidal strife, to wreck the labour movements of Italy and Germany, and to blunt their strength elsewhere. Whatever their intentions, that in fact is the consequence to which their acts are tending. Their policy is warmly applauded by our own Tories and the ragtag and bobtail of European reaction—by all, in fact, who want to prepare a more bitter slavery for the workers on the morrow of their liberation. And Mr. Paul Winterton, a Liberal journalist whose anti-revolutionary panic is landing him in the counter-revolutionary camp of his prototype, Mr. F. A. Voigt, calls me a "burrower" in the Labour Party (an epithet consonant neither with my figure nor my record) because I oppose this criminal folly.

Well, I'm going to fight all this while I've breath in my body. For this is the battle which will decide whether we win or lose the peace.

House of Commons K. Zilliacus

Sir,—Mr. K. Zilliacus' original article, in my opinion, calls for two observations:

(1) Mr. Zilliacus speaks too much in terms of power. According to him only the Big Four should decide the future of Europe. The small nations, which stretch over a considerable part of Europe, are not even mentioned by him, although their right of self-determination, as well as their right to independent and free life, is generally recognised. The establishment of these rights was not only one of the proclaimed war aims but has become embodied in the Charter of Uno as an essential part of post-war international law.

(2) Mr. Zilliacus is preoccupied only with the workers of Europe. He seems to forget that there are in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe more than 100 million hard-working peasants, who are neither Socialists nor Communists, and who have their own conception of life. The Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European peasant is not politically a minor as it is frequently wrongly assumed and stated in the industrialised West. On the contrary, he is fully conscious of his right to be master of his own and to live a life worthy of man. It must be admitted, peasants have a drawback in revolutionary times. They do not live in urban conglomerations. They are scattered over plains and mountains, and they are not so suited for armed revolutionary upheavals as the working population of towns. But nobody is steadier in political struggle. As the peasant has never acquiesced in the domination of feudal lords, he now accepts a master even less.

The peasant in Continental countries where peasants form the majority of the population has never been hostile to the industrial worker whom he has considered as a brother and whom he has readily supported in the struggle for better life. The strongest pre-war trade union of my country, Croatia, was organised on a voluntary basis within the framework of the Croat peasant movement. The peasant welcomes the industrial worker as brother, but would never accept imposed, authoritarian rule of a Communist or Socialist minority. The Croat peasant movement, of which I am a representative, fought, between the wars, six general elections in opposition to a brutal regime and polled a majority vote at all of them. In this war the peasant consciousness was immensely strengthened. And not only in my country.

Any attempt at building a new Europe without keeping a due account of the facts under (1) and (2) would amount to an effort to build a modern house on shifting sands. Dr. Juraj Krnjevic

Athenæum, S.W.1

UNITED FACE-SAVING

Sir,—Your editorial last week said that "it is now clear that the Russians do not wish for co-operation and friendly relations between the three Allied Powers." May I suggest that you have got the wrong end of the stick? The Russians gladly signed a 20-year alliance with us, they signed the Crimea Agreement with us, and they signed the Uno Charter with us. Further, they so correctly fulfilled their obligations to us up to the end of the war that even Churchill admitted that they had fulfilled all their obligations promptly and even to their own disadvantage.

Then came victory over Japan. And, completely contrary to the spirit of the British-Soviet Alliance, the atom bomb was declared a British-American (mainly American) "secret." In the meantime we were busily engaged in Greece violating our Crimea obligation to assist the Greeks to "wipe out all vestiges of Nazism and Fascism." Finally, in Indonesia, we proceeded to violate the right of the Indonesians to self-determination (though both the Atlantic and the Uno Charters guarantee this right to all peoples).

On a whole series of issues there was a solid Anglo-American bloc against the U.S.S.R.; we supported Fascist Argentina's admission to Uno against Molotov's protest; we opposed including "complete independence" in the Uno Charter as the aim of trusteeship, again in opposition to Molotov; we later opposed the representation of the W.F.T.U. at Uno, again against the Soviet view; we continued to fraternise with Franco, contrary to the known wishes of the U.S.S.R.; and throughout Europe our efforts to aid the "wiping out of all vestiges of Fascism" were a caricature of the real anti-Fascist policy pursued wherever the Red Army was the occupying force.

Against this background it was we, not the Russians, who tried to reverse the Potsdam Big Three decisions and belittled the need for Big Three meetings ("co-operation and friendly relations between the three Allied Powers").

Against this background stands Iran. A fact which has been studiously overlooked in our press is the fact that in Iran the Red Army *protected* the right of the Azerbaijan people to claim *equality* with the rest of the Iranian population, and *protected* the launching

A Page of British Folly

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JONATHAN CAPE

of a vast programme of social reform, including an enormous development of health and education services. Was it really a crime for the Red Army to refuse to withdraw till these reforms were guaranteed the respect they deserved from the central Government? And was it a crime for the U.S.S.R., as one of the Big Three, to demand that the Iran Government should give it economic facilities in the North which had been willingly accorded to the imperialist powers in the South—especially in view of the fact that the Soviet terms were far more favourable to the population than the conditions imposed by the Anglo-Iranian or any other oil company anywhere?

The U.S.S.R. stands for friendship with us and the U.S.A.; but *we* have rejected Big Three co-operation in favour of making Uno work as an "international court" for putting the U.S.S.R. in the wrong—a procedure far too reminiscent of the last days of the League of Nations.

Pat Sloan

[We agree, and have often said, that Russia's non-co-operation policy may well be due to the causes listed by Mr. Sloan. But our point on this occasion was not the measure of Western responsibility. We said the present Soviet attitude to Uno—Russia always preferred the Big Three—was not compatible with the desire to make it work, nor is Soviet propaganda designed to make Russian citizens expect co-operation with the West. We have to face the dangers of the present phase of Russian policy and consider what we can do to change it.—Ed., *N. S. & N.*].

"SENSIBLE MEN"?

Sir,—As soon as the Labour Party gains power, the member who wants a thorough-going Socialist policy becomes, in the opinion of many of the hierarchy and of your New Zealand correspondent, Harry Arnold, "a white ant" who leads "the blatant if spectacular clap-trap of a disgruntled handful." The consequence of this suicidal attitude for the N.Z. Labour Government is almost certain defeat in the elections of this year, if the recent bye-elections mean anything.

The attack on Jack Lee is quite unjustifiable, if not libellous. Here is a man who again and again in his weekly paper works for Socialism in his own lifetime in New Zealand, defends the Soviet Union against the widespread misrepresentation and downright lying, fiercely attacks Franco, Salazar, and clerical Fascism, exposes the evils of imperialism, and opposes the Bevin-Churchill policy in relation to Greece and the workers' governments in Eastern Europe. His writings on Bevin deserve to be read as classics. When the Labour leaders find it easier to work with prominent Tories than with men such as Lee, as they do, the movement wilts and dies. It loses the dynamism and enthusiastic drive of its most energetic people. Cynicism increases, and too many fall aside, and say, "If we are to have capitalism, then leave it to the capitalists."

Your correspondent eloquently describes the achievements of New Zealand's Labour Government. But bigger pensions and more leisure for bigger and better race meetings and football matches are not Socialism. He takes pride in the nationalisation of the main trading bank, but omits to mention how Walter Nash opposed Lee on this matter ten years ago inside the Cabinet. The industrialisation of the country is too slow. A country of boundless natural wealth it still remains without basic heavy industries. The Government has yet to carry out a single fundamental Socialist reform in regard to land and industry. Harry Arnold makes a big claim for its standard of education, but culturally it is a desert. This fratricidal difference between the Labour hierarchy and Jack Lee, which the ordinary Labour supporter would compose in a minute, should be ended at once. The Tory Opposition has begun to win Labour seats even where the vote has not been split.

A New Zealander

AWAKENED ASIA

Sir,—During the war years many thousands of British people, serving in all branches of the Services, have visited India and the Far East. They trained in India, fought in the jungles of Burma and Malaya, were prisoners in Siam and Japan, and are still to-day scattered throughout the whole of South-East Asia.

Though the reaction of the majority on returning home may be summed up in the wish never to leave England again, there remains nevertheless a considerable minority which discovered new interests and friends in those Eastern countries. If they could, many of them would willingly return to live in Asia, realising that though Europe can offer much to the East in technological knowledge, the East has much to offer Europe where the art of living is concerned.

These newly realised ideas, arising out of a comradeship based on a community of ideals and six years of war, must not be allowed to vanish; for here, ready-made, is a basis of real European-Asiatic understanding and sympathy.

The political awakening of Asia makes it more urgent than ever that the East and West should understand one another at once. All those who have arrived home in the last few months should realise that it is quite impossible for European politicians to deal fruitfully with Asiatics any longer in a patronising manner; though some Europeans may genuinely believe it, *no* Asiatic believes that European domination of an Asiatic country was ever undertaken "for the good of the natives." It is now only possible to gain the attention of Asiatic leaders if they are treated unhesitatingly as equals. We need to appreciate that most vitally now in India and Burma, just as the French need to appreciate it in Indo-China and the Dutch in Indonesia.

All those who wish to help develop and keep alive this new European-Asiatic relationship are asked to get in touch with the Union of Democratic Control, 34, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, from which they may obtain up-to-date knowledge of current events and local changes. Will those interested write to this address stating their own particular interests and putting forward briefly any original ideas they may have.

John Coast
Ian Watt } Ex-S.E.A.C.
Woodrow Wyatt, M.P.

John Freeman (Major), M.P. } Joint Secretaries,
Dorothy Woodman } Union of Democratic Control

UNRRA AND POLAND

Sir,—There are many questionable statements in the writings of Mr. Zilliacus, M.P., which have recently appeared in your columns, but I content myself with raising one point which is very serious. In a letter on "British Diplomats," he states "The British and American Governments have tried to make political capital out of the state of semi-starvation in Poland by letting it be known that Unrra supplies to that country would be increased if Mikolajczyk became Prime Minister."

The distribution of Unrra supplies is strictly governed by the resolutions and charter of the Administration which lays down that allocations are made on the basis of need, without regard to the political complexion of the receiving government. A full report on these distribution policies is submitted to the Council on which the Polish Government, and all other governments (including U.K. and U.S.A.) have one vote each. If your correspondent can provide information to the effect that the British and American Governments are using, or threatening to use, Unrra supplies for political purposes he should do so. If not, he should withdraw his very dangerous statement.

Tom Taylor
(Late Divisional Director Bureau of Supply, Unrra, Washington.)

THANKS

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Reflection upon adolescence is, with most kinds of writers, the signal for an uprush of self-deception: from Rousseau to Flaubert the truth becomes transformed by visions which gain beauty at the expense of the real situation. All of us are apt to forget what our youth was really like—the bewilderment, the rudeness and inattentiveness, the inappropriate response to people and events, the condign losses, the advancing and withdrawing, the appalling wastage of small opportunities—because, for a number of reasons, we cannot bear to think of it as other than rapturous.

Only those to whom middle age brings an appreciable increase of happiness can look back with unillusioned eyes. Among these Stendhal is conspicuous. What he did not know about being young is scarcely worth knowing. If it is true (and in the deepest sense I believe it is) that no novelist really has more than one theme, then Youth is Stendhal's. This man's career was a series of abortive attempts to relive his youth *without* its mistakes—and not only to relive it but to rewrite it, again and again. It is largely for this reason that the story of his life is so irritating to contemplate: if only, we feel, he would either let go and escape into one of the many unreal existences possible in nineteenth-century Europe—existences which at least offered possibilities of personal drama—or else put youth resolutely behind him and embrace the dullness inseparable from real contentment. When we read about them it is difficult not to feel that men like Baudelaire, Rimbaud, even Verlaine, seized more of what was offered. Poets, they lived poetically, even when—as in Rimbaud's case—they turned their backs on literature. There is nothing poetical, or even dimly picturesque, about Stendhal's life; his writings apart, he might just as well have made a good job of his consulship instead of a hopeless one. Dogged by ennui, he never knew what he really wanted, and if the object of his designs for once did not elude him, he immediately wanted something else. A maddening fellow, as women, especially, seem to have found.

It is, then, because he carried the whole burden of his youth always with him, that Stendhal treats it in his novels with such complete realism. The groundbass of *Le Rouge et le Noir* is the obdurate fact that the blunders of youth continue to matter because they poison the ground and spoil the triumphs which succeed them. Stendhal brings the Present to the bar of the Past, thus reversing the more usual process by which human beings abuse self-consciousness in the effort to evade their destiny. The result is that observed dryness of style and comment which appeals so greatly to the twentieth-century—as, in a famous phrase, Stendhal predicted it would; the dryness of a mind in which perpetual disillusionment has sharpened the vision of reality instead of resolving it into a nostalgic dream. The effect is not comforting, but it brings Stendhal himself nearer to the reader in what seems a common conspiracy. His novels are purely astringent, and their beauty—when they have any—is simply that of truth. In his two great finished books, the otherwise shadowless surface is broken up by romantical flourishes—passionate absurdities which owe something to the melodramatic vein in his own character, and perhaps as much to the exigencies of contemporary taste. The death of Mme de Rênal, the execution of Julien Sorel, and the end of the *Chartreuse*, belong to the paradoxes of great fiction. That they are blemishes few would deny; but the tone of feeling which dictated them is likewise among the things which help to endear Stendhal to us as a person. To see life too clearly—as Laclos, for instance, saw it—alienates sympathy, which was something Stendhal could not do without. Indeed, it is doubtful whether a novelist (as distinct from other kinds of writer) can ever afford to indulge fully *le plaisir aristocratique de déplaire.*

In that sense Stendhal's instinct was sound; but he did not always follow it, and in his large, but unfinished, novel, *Lucien Leuwen,* the glare is merciless, like one of those green arc-lamps which make hideous the night towns of to-day. *Lucien Leuwen,* in the state in which its author left it, is one of the sourest books ever written, but as a piece of unblinking observation it often reaches Tolstoyan levels. The plot would not seem to promise a great deal. The twenty-three-year-old son of a rich Paris banker, Lucien, is sent as a sub-lieutenant to the garrison at Nancy, where he incurs the hostility of his fellow-officers by a mixture of clumsiness and ostentation. He frequents the small, stuffily provincial salons of the town and falls in love with a widow who is strongly attracted to him but takes pains to conceal the fact for fear of annoying her tyrannical old father, who disapproves of Lucien's Liberal views. What with Mme de Chasteller's transports of nervous conventionality and Lucien's lack of *savoir faire,* the two muff their affair (for the time being), and Lucien returns to Paris, where his cynical father obtains him a sinecure and proceeds, with indolent amusement, to initiate him into the ways of the world. The genuine affection which exists between Lucien and his mother is the only chink in the armour of this ruthless book; but Mme Leuwen is too busy keeping her own end up, *vis-à-vis* her terrifying husband, to notice that she is losing the son she loves. By the time she realises what has been happening, it is too late: the World, the Flesh and the Devil have done their work and the iron has entered into Lucien's soul. After taking part in a municipal election, in circumstances which demonstrate to him once and for all the ineluctable evasions of public life, Lucien leaves Paris for a diplomatic post in Italy, and the novel comes to an abrupt end.

Why did Stendhal abandon a book so nearly completed? The ostensible reason is that he was dissatisfied with the social scenes, especially those in the latter half of the book, and wished to complete and rewrite those passages after having them "vetted" by Mme de Castellane in Paris. This is no doubt true as far as it goes, but it does not explain why Stendhal never returned to the book. From the marginal notes which are printed in at least one of the most recent editions, it is clear that the affair with Mme de Chasteller did not come to an end with Lucien's first departure from Nancy: twice in the course of the Paris chapters he is described as returning to Nancy, with the express object of seeing the lady again; but these episodes remained unwritten, as likewise the conclusion, which was, apparently, to have united the lovers in marriage.

In default of a clear explanation, I think we are justified in concluding that Stendhal's visit to Paris gave him cold feet about the political and social aspects of his novel. Politically, Stendhal found himself in the dilemma which faces all writers of strong Liberal opinions in a country ruled by an authoritarian government. Protest though he might that the views expressed by Lucien Leuwen were not to be attributed to him ("C'est un républicain qui parle," we find, again and again, in a footnote), Stendhal may well have been afraid lest publication of such a book might endanger his position or even land him in prison.

The social aspect of the novel will have caused him anxiety of a different kind. He was the type of writer who becomes more and more self-critical with age. Very robust men of genius usually care little about matters of taste and even of fact: their imagination and gusto carry them through. It is probable that Balzac was unaware of the vulgarity of his pictures of aristocratic life, and that in any case he would not have cared. This was not Stendhal's way, as it was not Proust's. Paris society had, to be sure, been opened to Stendhal long before this, through his cousin, Count Daru; but there is plenty of evidence that he was never quite at ease in *le monde,* and on this occasion the consciousness of his failure to get the social atmosphere of his novel exactly "right" may well have added to the awkwardness which made him rather less than welcome in those circles. Prim persons like Mme Sophie Gay had animadverted tartly on his "sergeant's mess" language and manners. Ladies to whom he made advances tittered behind their fans. For these and kindred reasons Stendhal never managed to get right through aristocratic society and out on the other side, as Proust did—Proust, who loved and hated such people every bit as much, but saw them still more clearly. So that the parties in Proust's novel may be felt to be more "real" than those in *Lucien Leuwen,* because the characters are less inexorably witty. The terror of boredom, which seems to be an endemic disease of the French nation, gives to Stendhal's drawing-rooms a surface as ornamental as that of a Wilde comedy, but at the same time lowers (at any rate for the English reader) the sense of utter truth disengaged by the rest of the book, since it is difficult to believe wholly in people who dare not make a simple observation in company for fear of being thought dull.

The novel is a wasp's nest of epigrams which recall La Bruyère and Chamfort rather than La Rochefoucauld. "Quand le mépris est devenu lieu commun, il n'y a plus que les sots qui l'expriment," strikes a shrewd blow for characters more estimable than Talleyrand, whom Stendhal had in mind. For this high-spirited and humorous man was by nature too romantic to compound for long with the drawbacks of any one state of life. In his intermittent heart a love of civilised society clashed with a vivid perception of the frivolity and callousness of civilised people. He wanted the best of all worlds—the easy-going warmth of the poor, the shrewdness of the bourgeoisie, and the graces of the rich:

> Ils me parleraient de leurs dix vaches, qui doivent leur donner au printemps prochain dix veaux, et moi j'aime à parler de l'éloquence de M. de Lamennais, ou du talent de madame Malibran comparé à celui de madame Pasta; je ne puis vivre avec des hommes incapables d'idées fines, si vertueux qu'ils soient; je préférerais cent fois les moeurs élégantes d'une cour corrompue. Washington m'eût ennuyé à la mort, et j'aime mieux me trouver dans le même salon que M. de Talleyrand. Donc, la sensation de l'estime n'est pas tout pour moi; j'ai besoin des plaisirs donnés par une ancienne civilisation . . .

This passage is more important for an understanding of Henri Beyle than his many attempts at overt autobiography, fascinating as these are. A cry from the heart, it explains the inconsolable restlessness of his life. We need not wonder, then, at the sneer which lurks behind Stendhal's competent but hard-featured prose—the sneer which Thackeray (with whom Stendhal had so much in common) managed on the whole to suppress, because his belief in himself was stronger. For I believe we must face the paradox that, in spite of the two immortal novels which he succeeded in bringing off, Stendhal belongs essentially to the ranks of the great failures: because the bulk of his enormous output consists of fragments, scissors-and-paste books, false starts, brilliant sketches, rough notes for novels that failed to materialise—all the Byronic paraphernalia of the over-gifted man who cannot face the fact that art involves renunciation, and so fritters away the precious months in pursuit of his own shadow. "The reader knows everything," exclaims Stendhal in one of those marginal notes which give to *Lucien Leuwen* an adventitious but very special interest. To be too constantly aware of his audience is for an artist desperate, and it is perhaps impossible for such a man to achieve the weight and authority—the absolute indubitability—of the great professionals. As we glance along our shelves, the collected works of a Goethe, a Victor Hugo, a Meredith, seem there by right, seldom though we may feel equal to breathing their air. They withdraw from contact with us, demanding submission. But Stendhal is a writer for every day; infinitely accessible; on the level; one of the few friends of our early youth who do not give us the shivers when we meet them again in middle age.

Paul Dombey

THE LIVINGSTONE TRAGEDY

Livingstone's Last Journey. By SIR REGINALD COUPLAND. *Collins.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

In 1866 Livingstone landed at Zanzibar and disappeared into the heart of Africa. Seven years later, still pressing on with the object of his expedition which was to discover the central watershed of the continent, to preach the wickedness of the slave trade and the necessity of the Christian faith—seven years later he was dead. Even in death, his body's terrible journey was not ended. Wrapped in the bark of a tree and hidden in what would pass as a bale of goods, the remains of the great explorer were borne back by his two servants, Chuma and Susi, through one peril after another to the coast. It was one of those acts of religious devotion which convince one of the fabulous impression made by Livingstone on the African mind.

Those last seven years of Livingstone's life are the crowning tragic phase. The calculated moves of Fate advance upon him as in the Greek drama. He is destroyed by circumstance and himself. One recalls the last journey of Mungo Park. Those expeditions are foredoomed when the explorer is no longer young, when his health has been damaged by earlier journeys, when he has what seem to him failures to wipe out, and when old tragedies privately undermine the will. The Zambesi expedition had been such a tragedy. Livingstone's wife had died—as so many of the wives of missionaries had been sacrificed—and for the first time in his life at 50, he had been willing to die himself. To be alone—that desire appears to have driven Livingstone like some mystical vision.

Sir Reginald Coupland has written a scholarly, indeed a brilliant account of this last phase of Livingstone's life, examining patiently all the controversies, bringing together the extraordinary elements of the story, and pausing from time to time to build up Livingstone's character as it moved from one disaster to the next. There are three personal relationships of uncommon interest. First of all, Livingstone's relationship with Kirk, whom Sir Reginald warmly and convincingly defends from the reckless charges of neglect and indifference made by Stanley; then the fantastic Stanley's relations with Livingstone, so touching, so ludicrous, so ambiguous and theatrical. Stanley established himself as both a saviour and a megaphone at Livingstone's side, found him when he was not lost, saved his life but, in a way, exploited him; behaved like a jealous circus showman and yet was himself a devoted man and an explorer of courage, dash and resource. The third relationship is Livingstone's unwilling dependence on the Arabs. Sick, exhausted and powerless he lived as the guest and dependent of precisely the kind of Arab slave trader whom he had exposed, who settled on him like an evil genius, to thwart his hopes and yet to seize what advantage they could out of his presence. In all these relationships the loneliness of Livingstone is terrifying. He had put himself beyond human help.

Except for the spirited notes in his Journal at the outset of this last journey; except for the resigned enjoyment he shows years later when he lies convalescent, waiting for his strength to return, watching the African market scene at Nyangwé, Livingstone is no longer the ruthless, dominant and confident figure of his early letters. Fatalism has succeeded faith. It is not to be wondered at. In the very first weeks of his journey, the ruin caused by the slave trade was ominous: murdered, starving and abandoned slaves deserted villages, land going back to jungle; cloth, the chief currency, dumped everywhere by the slavers so that Livingstone could not buy with his own and was reduced to semi-starvation. (It is too easily forgotten, in the attacks on the missionary, the trader and the white imperialism which followed them, that large areas of Africa were in a state of anarchy and ruin in the hard nineteenth century. Chieftains like Moselekatse were murderous Caesars and power politicians of the bush.) It was the civil war and the anarchy behind him that, as much as anything else, cut Livingstone off. But the first fatal blow was pure chance. One of his bearers ran off with his medicine chest. That, as Livingstone knew, was a death sentence in the long run. Henceforth dysentery and malaria would go uncured. Travelling in the wet season, wading waist deep through floods, Livingstone was soon staggering with pneumonia, coughing day and night.

> "Cannot walk," the Journal says, "pneumonia of the right lung . . . sputa rust of iron and bloody: distressing weakness. Ideas flow through the mind with great rapidity and vividness in groups of twos and threes; if I look at any piece of wood, the bark seems covered with figures and faces of men and they remain, though I look away and turn to the same spot again."

It took three years to reach Ujiji where his stores, his fresh supplies of drugs and his letters were supposed to be waiting for him. When he got there, he found no letters and his goods stolen. There are few more harrowing stories in the history of the loneliness and misery of travellers, than Livingstone's long collapse at Ujiji, where he lived by the charity of those who had probably robbed him; indeed only his subsequent sufferings, his subsequent betrayals by the Arabs and the misery of his death, surpass the melancholy of this time. There are two happy phases only: the first at Nyangwé where, no longer ruthless enough to get his way, now encouraged, now deceived by the Arabs and quite at their mercy, he sat watching the African crowds. That happiness was brutally ended by the massacre of the population by the very Arabs on whom he was pinning his hopes; and by a wicked irony, the tribes rising against the Arabs three times attempted his life as he got away. The Arabs had idly weighed the value of Livingstone: he was an open enemy of "the Trade," could he perhaps be used as a kind of decoy for them in new territory, if they helped him in his plans? The second happy phase begins with the meeting with Stanley, who saved him morally and physically, even though he was not really lost.

Sir Reginald Coupland discusses in irresistible detail the incursion of this suspicious, theatrical Welsh-American into the affair; Stanley's fantastic career hardly less remarkable than Livingstone's own, and the quarrels that followed him. The young man and the ageing man, the conquering adventurer and the arduous saint, the dashing, violent traveller and the patient dedicated explorer, illuminate each other vividly in their dramatic meeting.

The devotion of Stanley is not impaired, in our eyes, by the fact that it was impurely mixed with the thrill of getting his scoop; the gratitude of Livingstone is not less for being marked by the irony of the older man. It is fitting that both men had a good conceit of themselves. In the mounting tragedy where Livingstone seems less a body than a moral phenomenon, the entry of Stanley brings an element of the blustering, the animal, the bizarre. It is the breath of relief, before the last tragic act.

The story of Livingstone has been told many times, but the Kirk and Waller papers made it possible to reconsider many earlier judgments; the attraction and value of Sir Reginald's book lie in the handling of the new evidence, in the freshness and fairness of the narrative. There is no attempt to draw a full life portrait; but the mystical Livingstone of the last phase, at any rate, is put before us in all the moving reality of the known facts.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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DETECTION AND SIMENON

Lord of the Sorcerers. By CARTER DICKSON. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Black Eye. By CONYTH LITTLE. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Appleby's End. By MICHAEL INNES. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Proof of the Pudding. By PHŒBE ATWOOD TAYLOR. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Case of the Missing Men. By CHRISTOPHER BUSH. *Macdonald.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Holy Disorders. By EDWARD CRISPIN. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Archdeacons Afloat. By C. A. ALINGTON. *Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Alias the Dead. By GEORGE HARMON COLE. *Hammond.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Spy in the Brown Derby. By BERNARD NEWMAN. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Lost Moorings. By GEORGES SIMENON. *Routledge.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

When Lady Helen Loring brings to England a lamp with an ancient Egyptian curse on it, and the nature of the curse is that anyone who appropriates the lamp shall be blown to smithereens, and Lady Helen vanishes into thin air after crossing the threshold of her ancestral home, and the author is Carter Dickson, the reader naturally steels himself to meet another of those confounded contraptions, probably making use of atomic energy. This is just reflex action. If a respectable author indulges in a preface it is worth devoting some attention to it, especially when it closes with the words, "You have been warned." In his prefatory letter to Ellery Queen Mr. Dickson expressly declares that *Lord of the Sorcerers* is *not* the usual locked-room problem; and you had better believe him, even when Lady Helen's father starts to disappear in much the same way. Actually, the trump card in this masterly trick of deception has been borrowed from Mrs. Agatha Christie's pack. But she carries so many aces up her sleeve that this information will give nothing away. It is worth pitting your wits against Mr. Dickson on this occasion, as he sprinkles clues liberally and plays absolutely fair, while manipulating the plot with his usual devilish cunning. The characters are admittedly mere puppets, and old H. M. makes a deafening noise; but *Lord of the Sorcerers* is far superior in craftsmanship to any other detective book on this list.

Miss Conyth Little cannot eschew the pleasure of personalities. The lively characters she invents find themselves constantly frustrated by having to get on with the plot. In *The Black Eye* the heroine and an American sergeant on leave are sharing a friend's flat with coy flirtatiousness when it turns out to be infested with bodies. Miss Little's people are very amusing but her crimes drift towards nonsense; and the method and motive in this are past a joke.

Appleby's End is another instance of frivolous detection. Inspector Appleby investigates the oddities of the Raven family with his usual condescension. But if you're hoping Appleby will meet his end, you will be disappointed. The title is the name of a station, and the plot is a practical joke. Michael Innes is rutted in surrealism and prefers to sacrifice his reputation rather than break his habits.

Cape Cod meals tend to be stodgy, but Miss Taylor has for once included a juicy, old-fashioned plum in her ingredients. It is worth munching your way through *Proof of the Pudding* for the pleasure of trying to spot the villain—not by knowledge of the local topography, as Amy Mayo does it, but by sheer intuition. The character in question is very judiciously placed in the plot, neither skulking in the background nor too much in evidence, but with an aroma of Edgar Wallace that should enable you to sniff him out.

Spotting the villain becomes all too easy in *The Case of the Missing Men*, which never deviates from the most elementary methods of mystification. Ludovic Travers is a beginner's detective, always several moves behind the reader in his deductions. Waiting for him to catch up is as tedious as going for a walk with a six-year-old child.

Mr. Crispin belongs to the highly-educated school, who quote from the classics at the head of each chapter. Their trouble is that with all their erudition they are no nearer an original plot and have to gloss over their imperfections by all sorts of literary extravagance. In *Holy Disorders* a cathedral organist is drugged in the cathedral; and soon afterwards the Preceptor is squashed. The plot should be exciting, but the author allows himself to be distracted by the prevalence of witchcraft in the neighbourhood. As the time when these crimes occur is wartime, spies too, those dreary concomitants of war, are liable to obtrude. Gervase Fen, the literary don, lords it over this jumble of attractions.

Archdeacons Afloat are sailing under false colours on this ship. The Dean of Durham, harking back to his memories of Greek cruises, has indulged in a flight of fancy. A placid party of Hellenic Travellers encounter some up-to-date brigandage in the Peloponnese. The dramatic moment comes when a captive archdeacon sends a crucial message to a fellow archdeacon in a biblical cryptogram. There is no question of thrills or detection—just a mild adventure story in the best clerical taste.

Alias the Dead is a competent American story of an impersonation that goes wrong. Mr. Cole is too prolific to write with much subtlety, but he keeps up a good pace and tries his best to spring a surprise in the last chapter. With a protuberant clue to help you, it will be your own fault if you are surprised.

Papa Pontivy has gravitated to Hollywood. His latest exploit is the breaking up of a Nazi spy ring among the film magnates. Mr. Newman clicks out spy stories like a tape machine; and *The Spy in the Brown Derby* is no worse than its predecessors.

At last we come to Simenon. This Belgian author of the popular Maigret detective stories has swollen to a portentous size in French literature. He writes with the utmost fluency and self-confidence and undoubtedly possesses a gimlet eye for nuances of local colour; but would he have been widely acclaimed as the modern Maupassant had he not himself boldly announced that his intention was to be a great writer? No critic is able now to read a book by him just for pleasure. You must make up your mind whether it is a great work of art. *Lost Moorings* contains a couple of stories: *Banana Tourist* and *Blind Path*. The first describes the moral collapse in Tahiti of a young Frenchman who has gone there to lead a primitive life on bananas and fish. The second follows the career of a White Russian gigolo from the splendours of the Riviera to the squalor of Warsaw. Both are most readable and vivid; and in both stories the psychology and action hinge on crime. Criminal psychology is fascinating and baffling. To analyse it fully a writer must delve as deep as Dostoevsky. Simenon sticks to the surface; and his explanations of criminal conduct are those that a criminal himself would give. His role is that of a superb reporter in cases where the evidence is ample for the jury of readers to convict, but never enough to comprehend. Perhaps his plots never stray from crime because criminals have to be men of decision; and the limited field of thoughts that leads to decisive acts allows his photographic eye to swing round in perfect focus. Maupassant might not have observed more accurately, but he extended his observations outside the confines of a police court.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

COMMUNISM IN ACTION

The Chinese Communists. By STUART GELDER. *Gollancz.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. Stuart Gelder went to China as a war correspondent, but found the censorship so severe that he was able only "to cable a few more half-truths" than his colleagues. He and several others pressed for permission to visit Communist-controlled areas, and in May 1944 Chiang Kai-shek gave his consent. Then Mr. Gelder's duties took him elsewhere, but on his return to China he interviewed Communist leaders, and sympathetic non-Communists like Madame Sun Yat-sen and Sun Fo. He obtained documents banned by the censor and brought them away in an American plane. They are said to be the only copies outside China, and they make up the bulk of this book.

The most important of Mr. Gelder's smuggled treasures are those in which Communist leaders speak for themselves, such as Mao Tse-tung's reports to the Kungchantang (Chinese Communist Party) and it is to part of their merit that they are not addressed to foreigners.

Every Chinese is an historian, so Chinese Communism will not be like anyone else's:

> Chinese history will determine the Chinese system . . . which will be different from the Russian system.
>
> We have organised many co-operatives of the peasants, but they are not the Soviet-style.
>
> In the present stage . . . the Chinese people cannot, and therefore should not attempt to build a Socialist State.
>
> Socialism can be reached only through democracy; this is an undisputed truth of Marxism. In China the period of striving for democracy will be very long.

Can such lukewarm Communism produce results? In China it has. The whole book must be read to get an adequate picture (freedom of speech and religion, prison reform, more education and increased production), but land-reform will serve as an illustration. Land-reform is all important in China, where 54 per cent. of farmers pay rent to absentee landowners, the average rent being 43.22 per cent. of the farmers' total receipts. Such exorbitant rents lead to debt (usually to the landowner) and, moreover, the farmer has no certainty of tenure. The original "Land for the Tiller" policy of the Kungchantang transferred the land to the working farmer, but this has been replaced by the "Rent and Interest Reduction" policy. Tenants and landowners are called together by Kungchantang officials and new leases fixed for five years, or more, at lower rents (usually 25 per cent. reduction). Outstanding debts are not repudiated, but repayment is spread over several years and interest reduced. This is not so cheerless for the landowner as it sounds, because technical aid and the drive for increased production result in better farming—his only real guarantee of payment.

The speeches translated in this book are frank and fair, such as Mao's opinion that "large numbers of progressive, democratic elements" are to be found in the rival Kuomintang; and his insistence on the need for self-criticism, "never conceal our mistakes and really try hard to correct them." Lin Tsu-han lists a number of "defects" which "must be remedied."

The Kungchantang number only 1,210,000 members (Mao's figures of April 1945), so it is evident that they have had enthusiastic support from the great majority of people in the areas under their control, or they could not have resisted the Japanese so successfully. This may be because ublic interest is put above party:

> every comrade should be made to understand that everything a Kungchantang member says or does is judged by its conformity with the major interests of the majority of the people or its acceptability by the majority of the people.

No wonder an American Missionary said, "This is the kind of China which I have always hoped

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to see," and Mr. Gelder wrote, "while they have life they are in charge of it. If I were writing in another age I think perhaps I should say of them that this people is possessed of the spirit of God!"

Western observers contribute some interesting reports to the book, which ends with a criticism of Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny* by Chen Pai-te, rather below the standard of fairmindedness set by other Kungchantang leaders.

Both Kungchantang and Kuomintang claim their policies are based on Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People. They quarrel over interpretation. Kuomintang stress the first principle (national unity), while Kungchantang stress the third (people's livelihood). By the agreement of February 25th, 1946, the armed forces of both parties are to be united, a step which should go a long way towards realising the first principle. The achievements of the Kungchantang revealed in this book will certainly influence the third.

Since the *News-Chronicle* sent Mr. Gelder to Chungking the Chinese Government has abolished the inevitable wartime censorship but his book is important to all concerned with current events in China, and will also interest many who study the wider aspects of world politics.

BERNARD MARTIN

READING THE BIBLE

The Bible And The Common Reader. By MARY ELLEN CHASE. *Collins.* 10s. 6*d*.

Miss Chase was hitherto known to me only by a simple and charming little novel, *Dawn in Lyonesse*; and, seeing something of hers very different, I approached it with critical curiosity. As Lecturer in English at Smith College, she gave courses on the influence of the Authorised Version on English writers, and found, as one might expect, few of her students who had more than the most elementary knowledge of it. She therefore resolved to write a story of the Bible, not, of course, for scholars, but for the common reader, and yet sufficiently abreast of modern scholarship not to demand constant revision.

Ignorance of the Bible is bad, but still more harmful is knowing it wrongly. Few things have been more pernicious than the fancy that every word is literally inspired, and every hero a model for our imitation. The savageries of Samuel or Elijah have been the sanction of innumerable vile murders; and the despicable treachery of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, belauded as it was by an over-patriotic Ephraimite, has been the scorn of the unbeliever and the difficulty of the wriggling apologist.

Less mischievous, but equally demanding correction, is the old acceptance of the folk-lore in the Old Testament, not as—what it is—an unsurpassed collection of tales, but as accurate and prosaic fact. The story of the Flood, the punning account of Babylon, the tale of Jacob's cheating and his wrestling with the Angel, the saga of Joseph; in fact all the lore with which Frazer deals so magnificently, are, if read properly—if, as Jowett bade, we read the Bible like any other book—of unsurpassed interest. I was pleased, then, at the first glance, to see that Miss Chase's pupils, when in their turn they come to teach, will give these tales their proper place, and that coming generations may be saved the pain of slowly working their way out of old superstitions.

The text chosen is the Authorised Version, and, in view of the beauty of the language, it is natural that Miss Chase should prefer it to any other; but I think her attachment to it is at times too close. For example, she gives "I know that my Redeemer liveth" as if she were re-writing the libretto of Handel. Not only is that verse utterly corrupt, but no honest restoration of it can make it refer, however remotely, to Jesus Christ.

To prepare her way, Miss Chase gives a brief but sufficient sketch of the wonderful discoveries which scholars have made in the last hundred and fifty years, and which have revolutionised the attitude of thinking men towards the scriptural documents. She tells of the treble or quadruple authorship of the Hexateuch, and gives the proof that hardly a fragment of it, if so much, can be by Moses, while Deuteronomy must be as late as the reign of Josiah. That the Book of Judges is a collection of Blind Harry stories, strung together on a "Midrash" or moral, she makes quite plain, and shows how the authors of Kings had no conception of the necessity of sifting and comparing their sources, while, still worse, they manipulated their tales to prove a lesson. As for Chronicles, she rightly relegates it to the dust-heap, to be joined later by Leviticus and Ezekiel.

Perhaps more useful to the common reader will be found the few pages in which she analyses the structure of Hebrew poetry, and explains the various forms of "parallelism" on which it is based. It is here that her enthusiasm finds full play; for she is right in claiming for it a rank with the very highest in the world. Job is fully equal to the *Prometheus*—though, incidentally, Miss Chase weakens her claim by allowing the possibility that the original author may have had a hand in the feeble performances of Elihu. The songs of the Second Isaiah will not suffer by comparison with those of any rhapsode in any language. As for the Third Isaiah, we must remember that he wrote to soothe the disillusionment of the exiles who had come back full of hope to find despair. No poem is better suited for us to-day than this, which came "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to comfort all that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

I should like to dilate on Miss Chase's summary of Ruth, which to her as to Goethe is the most beautiful of all idylls; on her criticism of Jonah; on her comparison of "Kohaleth" with Omar Khayyam. (Incidentally, I wish her plan had allowed her to compare it with the Book of Wisdom.) But space forbids.

She makes a few slips, of which I may mention one. Spinoza never used the phrase "ein Gottbetrunkener Mann."

E. E. KELLETT

Les Faits sociaux ne sont pas des Choses. By JULES MONNEROT. *Gallimard, Paris.* 115 *fr*.

M. Monnerot has written a book of considerable significance. Its method is in line with the tradition of Descartes' *Meditationes de prima philosophia* applied to various trends of contemporary or recent sociology and philosophy which M. Monnerot integrates into an original and suggestive systematic treatise. The book is international in outlook and origin: Husserl, Jaspers, Max Weber, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Marx, Pareto, Sorel, recent English anthropologists—and many more have contributed to nourish the author's thought.

M. Monnerot examines first the possible conditions of a contemporary sociology. He is clearly nearer to Saint-Simon, Comte and Marx, all non-academic sociologists, than to Durkheim whom he criticises admirably. Indeed, the whole book might be regarded as a reasoned refutation of Durkheim's famous *Les Règles de la Méthode sociologique*. The second part of the work outlines some fundamental sociological categories, proceeding from general sociological structures to more concrete ones. There is perhaps a certain lack of proportion in this section of M. Monnerot's study. A concluding part discusses the limitations of historical materialism.

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The book has throughout the character of an introduction to a general or perhaps better "future" sociology. M. Monnerot will have to fulfil what he promises. He promises much.

The Way of Happiness or The Prelude to the Good News—A Study of the Beatitudes. By JOHN GORDON JAMESON. *Hodge, 3s. 6d.*

For more than twenty years Sheriff Jameson has preached the Good News in the streets of Edinburgh. A picturesque white haired figure, he was in his young days prominent at Balliol where he often wore his scarlet St. Andrew's gown in the evening and even then was fond of reading the Bible in his melodious voice. At a later stage he took silk and was a popular member of the House of Commons.

After retiring from politics he began to preach the Gospel or what he preferred to call the "Good News" and these short discourses have been published in two slim volumes. Scotch religion is often associated with austerity and the author is an Elder of the Free Kirk; but his preaching presents Jesus Christ in his most genial aspect and his doctrine as the one source of real happiness. As regard the Beatitudes "Here is a happiness which conquers circumstances, laughs at misfortune, and smiles at sorrow. Here is good news for the sons of men."

Week-end Competitions

No. 848

Set by F. C. C.

I have been given an enchanting little coloured china figure of Wesley, about eight inches high. With one hand he clasps a Bible to his stomach, the other hand is raised in exhortation. Only it is not actually a hand, but a smooth blackened stump, such as could hardly have been produced by an accidental breakage. Was it deliberately thrust into the flames? If so, why? and by whom? Readers are invited to answer these questions in not more than twelve lines of verse, or 120 words of prose. Entries by May 7th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 845

Set by Sebastian

The usual prizes are offered for a quatrain replying to the Escapist Epigram by Sir Edward Marsh.

Report by Sebastian

Competitors in their hundreds stood howling round Sir Edward Marsh's ivory tower and abused him in every tone of voice known to indignation, from the polished to the downright rude. He had asked for it. Indeed, knowing he had asked for it, he had skilfully dug his way out of the tower and had joined the crowd. None called more loudly for his own blood than Sir Edward himself. Loudly is the wrong word, of course. The crowd was hushed and the Elder uttered. William Bliss had doubts and ended by backing both parties, but I think he was better as an enemy than as a supporter. The dig at the translator of La Fontaine had a happy malice. The neatest *tu quoque* came from D. W. Sciama. I divide the prizes between Sir Edward Marsh and seven of his enemies: Little Billee, Leslie Johnson, F.C.C., Aubrey Herbert, William Bliss, Marianne Rover, Fergie.

Old crusty denizen of ivory towers,
How dare you mock such agony as ours,
Who, since we know "some life of men unblest,"
Like Thyrsis, cannot rest?
EDWARD MARSH

I note, sir, that my verses give you pain,
But since you read them still, however harsh,
Your life must flow; you cannot just remain
An aimless eddy, or a stagnant marsh.
"LITTLE BILLEE"

Thanks, poetaster; I will spare you pain.
My verses elsewhere will expect their guerdon:
But why imply you've mastered their refrain,
When it is clear you cannot grasp their burden?
LESLIE JOHNSON

THE BARD REPLIES (PUBLICLY)
If I have found existence grim and harsh
Must I conceal the fact, Sir Edward Marsh,
To let you breathe more lightly? Dear, oh dear!
How tactless Shakespeare was, to write *King Lear*

THE BARD REPLIES (PRIVATELY)
In this sweet, flowering April, dew-bepearled,
Believe me, Eddie, I should really hate
To lay upon your collar-bone, "the weight
Of all this unintelligible world." F. C. C.

I'm sorry, Edward Marsh, that you complain
of my reminders that the world's a wreck.
Nor would I wish to cause your chest a pain
such as you give me, Edward, in the neck.
AUBREY HERBERT

TO AN ESCAPIST
Markets and skies are black, horizons rock,
Famine and fear await the atom's shock,
And you, Escapist, think to save *your* chest
With pigmy shield devised: *Ars Longa Est!*
E. M. HERRING

A fox, having lost his brush, tried to persuade
His brother foxes to dock theirs; but they
Preferred, with smiles, to be as they were made.
Perpend, Sir Edward. *De te fabula.*

Since Truth is Beauty; Beauty Truth—then we
May let, Sir Edward, these sad grovellers go
Back, as the dog who could not let it be—
Et sicut sus in volutabris. WILLIAM BLISS

Edward, beloved, set your mind at rest,
Light-hearted laughter will be always thine.
I yearn to put my sorrows on your chest
But as thou have none they remain in mine.
MARIANNE ROVER

So this is his reward—a curse, a blow,
For that he merely said these things are so?
Thus in the days of old did tyrants use
To hang up slaves who brought unwelcome news.
FERGIE

"Dear Sir, fear not for your untroubled breast.
I would not, for the world, disturb a hair.
My overstatement was but to suggest
That, now and then, you'd condescend to care."
BRIAN OLVER

On top of famine, murder, loot and rape,
My lamentations must seem rather harsh.
But often those who, bard-sick, would escape,
Avoid the Mire to flounder in the Marsh.
DIABLOTIN

No doubt, Sir, you are one of those who've planned
A blind eye to increasing world-despair;
But conscience cannot hide its head in sand:
If woe there be, I'll see you get your share!
ALLAN M. LAING

Marsh, you are evidently much distressed,
Your bard-disgust appears in every line.
No doubt you're right to get it off your chest,
But don't, for God's sake, put it on to mine.
D. W. SCIAMA

Sir, there is no escape. Your taunt's unjust.
Not I, but the world's self's discords, jangle my keys.
We're both, whate'er the butt of our disgust,
But different symptoms of the same disease.
R. J. P. HEWISON

Quare ita uis cunctos in luctus uertere tergam
Eduardi, populus cum tibi quisque dolet?
At si tu clademque periclaque spernere pergis,
Te, uereor, clades commouet illa prius.
PHLATTOTHRAT

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Personal

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Personal—continued

PLEASE listen to Margaret Rawlings—she is appealing to you on April 28th, in the Week's Good Cause for the help of the Deaf. National Institute for the Deaf, 105 Gower Street, W.C.1.

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